

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

GUIDE TO

GREENER GROUNDS



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DREAM
GREENER

WHY DREAM GREENER?



A WELL MAINTAINED AND PROPERLY DESIGNED LAWN AND LANDSCAPE CAN INCREASE YOUR HOME VALUE AS MUCH AS 20%

Lawn and landscape contractors in Pittsburgh are everywhere. Their services range from ongoing maintenance, landscape design, installation and construction, gardening and horticulture, irrigation installation and management, and arboriculture.

Dream Greener is proud of being the best when it comes to lawn and landscape maintenance. Our residential clients want one company to call. They're also looking for proactive communication with tips and suggestions on how to have the best yard on the block. This Greener Grounds Guide is designed to help with just that!

CREATE SPRING LANDSCAPE ENVY

MOST SPRING BLOOMING PLANTS MUST BE INSTALLED IN THE FALL TO REAP THE SHOW STOPPING REWARDS.



TREES

DOGWOOD
REDBUD
FLOWERING CHERRY
SERVICEBERRY
HAWTHORN
MAGNOLIA



SHRUBS

AZALEA
NINEBARK
WEIGELA
FORSYTHIA
RHODODENDRON
DEUTZIA



BULBS

HYACINTHS
DAFFODIL & JONQUIL
ALIU
IRIS
CROCUS
TULIP

Here are some fall plantings that must take place this fall so that you can reap the rewards after the chilly months ahead. The first plant listed is the one in the photograph.

September - November is the ideal season for planting because it encourages root growth through the winter to establish a firm underground foundation before the heat of the summer returns. As an extra benefit, the fall season naturally brings more rainfall and cooler temperatures, so your new plants will also require less watering.

TREES SHOULD BE PLANTED APPROXIMATELY 4-6 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FIRST HARD FROST SO THE ROOTS CAN PENETRATE THE SOIL BEFORE THE GROUND BECOMES TOO FROZEN.

DELIGHT DURING THE OFF SEASON

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE JOY OF UNEXPECTED BURSTS OF COLOR IN THE FALL AND WINTER.



FALL TREES

MAPLE
OAK
ELM



FALL SHRUBS

FOTHERGILLA
WITCH HAZEL
ABELIA



FALL PERENNIALS

AMSONIA
PLUMBAGO
SEDUM



WINTER EVERGREENS

'KINGS GOLD'
CHAMAECYPARIS
'BLUE POINT' JUNIPER



WINTER BARK

YELLOW OR RED TWIG
DOGWOOD
VIRGINIA SWEETSPIRE
PAPERPARK MAPLE



DEFEAT CRABGRASS

DON'T LET CLUMPS OF RAGGEDY CRABGRASS DISRUPT YOUR LAWN.

WHAT IS CRABGRASS?

Crabgrass is a very invasive weed that can sprout nearly anywhere there is water and sunlight. It is an annual plant that re-seeds prolifically which is why it is important to try to control it as soon as you see it. A small patch one-year can become a large area in a few seasons if left unattended.

It's called Crabgrass because it has creeping stems that root freely and shoot out from the side, giving it a crab-like movement growth pattern.

HOW DOES CRABGRASS GROW?

Crabgrass seeds germinate when soil temperatures reach between 55 and 60 degrees – in our area, somewhere after the forsythia bloom but before lilacs start to flower.

Crabgrass has the ability to grow in sidewalk cracks, along walk and driveway edges, in between patio stones, along garden edgeways, and of course - in your lawn.

WHAT IS THE LIFECYCLE OF CRABGRASS?

This annual grows all season – spring through fall. Early in the season you'll see it in clump formations. Towards the end of summer and beginning of fall, tall seed heads form, which is how crabgrass re-seeds itself.

Crabgrass seeds are very hardy and can remain viable in the soil for years. Mowing crabgrass will not eradicate it. Some crabgrass is killed off during the cold winters, but the seeds remain for next season.

PRE-EMERGENT CONTROL

Crabgrass prevention can include the application of a pre-emergent (before seeds germinate) herbicide. The pre-emergent product becomes active in the top layer of soil where crabgrass seeds sprout. The seeds actually do sprout, but can't grow, effectively killing the crabgrass. Crabgrass seeds can remain viable for years.

Once applied, the pre-emergent becomes activated after a good rain or watering, and acts like a type of barrier. This is important to understand since anything that might break that barrier – weed pulling, lawn aeration, your dog digging – will compromise the effectiveness of the pre-emergent.

CRABGRASS PROVIDES A NECESSARY FUNCTION IN NATURE BY HELPING TO LOOSEN SOIL SO IT CAN ABSORB WATER AND NUTRIENTS. WHILE CRABGRASS IS A NUISANCE, IT'S ALSO A RED FLAG TO ADDRESS THE HEALTH OF YOUR LAWN.

LAWN RENOVATIONS

OVER TIME, GRASS NEEDS TO BE REPLACED.

LAWN AERATION PASSES

A double pass means the aerator will do a checker-board pattern of the lawn, completing one entire pass of the lawn in one direction, and then a second pass perpendicular to the first pass.

For Pittsburgh soils, anything less than two passes is almost inconsequential. For new construction or severely compacted lawns, you may need to go over the grounds multiple times.

OVERSEEDING QUANTITY

According to the label on most seed bags, they recommend 3-7 pounds per thousand square feet depending on the current condition of the lawn. An established lawn may only need 3 pounds, but bare dirt would require 7 pounds or more.

LAWN COMPOSTING

Lawn composting an eco-friendly process that incorporates a thin layer of rich, earthy, organic material to your existing lawn. This material, called compost, is the end product of a complex feeding pattern involving hundreds of different organisms, including bacteria, fungi, worms, and insects. What remains after these organisms break down organic materials is the rich, earthy substance that gardeners value so highly as a soil improvement.

There are many reasons why you should add compost to your lawn including water conservation, weed prevention, disease prevention, soil amendment, and natural growth enhancement.

FALL OVERSEEDING BENEFITS

We recommend fall overseeding because:

1. Spring is the time to apply crabgrass pre-emergents and your desirable grass seeds typically lose the battle against pre-emergents.
2. Aerating is an important practice that takes place with overseeding and the holes will break the thin barrier of the crabgrass pre-emergent, making it ineffective.
3. The young seedlings often do not have enough time to reach maturity before the heat of the summer hits and they are weakened or killed by drought, disease or pests.
4. In the fall, Mother Nature provides us with increased natural precipitation and cooler weather. Diseases are less active and the soil is still warm.

YOU CAN SEE GRASS GERMINATING WITHIN 7-10 DAYS OF OVERSEEDING.



KEEPING THE LANDSCAPE TIDY

Trimming and pruning doesn't just make your trees and shrubs look "neat and tidy" by cutting back unruly branches. It also helps them grow stronger and healthier by removing dead that is wasting your plant's energy and sparking new growth.



AS A GENERAL RULE OF THE THUMB, PRUNE FLOWERING TREES & SHRUBS JUST AFTER THEY'RE DONE FLOWERING.

Trimming and pruning are actually two different services. When you are trimming you are just removing growth on the outer most part of the plant. Pruning is more technical and can require large portions of the plant to be removed. Pruning on deciduous plants should be done in the winter when they're dormant to reduce the amount of stress. Pruning on evergreens is best done in spring and fall. On either type of plant, dead wood can be removed at anytime safely, as long as proper techniques are used.

Whether trimming or pruning a key to remember is that most of the time you never want to remove more than 1/3 of the plant.

WINTER PRUNING

Late fall and early spring, before the deciduous trees and shrubs lose their leaves is a great time to see dead wood and remove it.

Some keys to look for are:

- No leaves
- Buds are not thriving/dead
- Wood color is different than the rest
- The limb is brittle and easily breaks off

Sometimes plants will have branches that grow towards each other and end up crossing. Rubbing branches can be damaging to the plant because they produce wounds and decay. Remove the limb that won't affect the shape of the tree, or is not in line to rub against another branch in the future.



PERSONALIZE YOUR WATERING

SINCE PLANTS MAKE FOOD USING THE PHOTOSYNTHESIS PROCESS, KEEPING AIR AND WATER IN CHECK IS ESSENTIAL.



We recommend practicing deep watering because this gives plants the moisture they need today while also storing a little extra for the future.

This is why you can not rely 100% on automatic irrigation systems. Instead, supplement them with manual watering as necessary providing extra water when and where it's needed.

Your personal involvement also allows you to inspect your plants for potential problems like animal damage or plant diseases - or hot and windy conditions that may quickly evaporate the water.



FOUR FACTORS THAT CHANGE WATERING REQUIREMENTS:

1. WIND
2. TEMPERATURE
3. SOIL STRUCTURE
4. PLANT FOLIAGE AMOUNT

LEAF YOUR MAINTENANCE TO US

YOUR PROPERTY IS A REFLECTION OF YOU. IT CREATES AN IMPRESSION ON YOUR GUESTS AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT SHOULD FULFILL YOUR NEEDS AND DESIRES.



As you've learned, there is so much value in taking the time to properly maintain your lawn, trees and shrubs. You're investing in being able to enjoy them for many years to come!

The cost of not maintaining your property, isn't just in the lower home value. It could also be expensive if you have to replace a specimen tree or shrub.

Let the experts at Dream Greener show you the best strategies for maintaining your outdoor space. It's our promise to exceed your expectations every step of the way.

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