



Wm. Wheat & Son

FLORIST & GARDEN CENTRE

520 Chester Road, Little Aston. WS9 0PU
0121 353 7123 / 4090 www.wmwheat.co.uk



Gardeners Guide to: Autumn Lawn Care

Autumn, time to examine your lawn for signs of summer wear-and-tear, Any treatment is best carried out during September to mid October, when there is time for the grass to respond before soil temperatures fall and growth stops.

Scarifying Regular raking (or scarifying as it known) keeps levels of thatch (old grass stems, dead moss and other debris) at an acceptable level. Layers of thatch greater than 1cm (3/8in) deep can impede water and fertiliser penetration. To remove thatch, rake vigorously but carefully with a spring-tined rake. Note: Take care if using a mechanical scarifier, turf is damaged if scarified too deeply. Do not scarify in spring - opt instead for a light raking, as the lawn may not recover in summer conditions.

Aerating (spiking) Aerating (or spiking) lawns will encourage better movement of air and water in the root zone. A well-aerated lawn will manage better in periods of drought or water logging. For an average lawn, aeration every two to three years should be adequate. Concentrate on areas that receive the most wear and those that are compacted. Small areas can be spiked with a garden fork, spacing holes 10-15cm (4-6in) apart and deep. On clay or waterlogged soils use a hollow-tine aerator every three to four years. This extracts plugs of soil from the lawn. After hollow-tining, sweep up the plugs and then rake a top-dressing (see below) into the holes to improve air and moisture penetration.

Flattening To correct bumps and troughs, use an edging iron or spade to slice through the turf and roll it back. Fork over the underlying ground and add or remove soil as needed. Replace the turf, pressing the edges together, and water thoroughly.

Top-dressing Top-dressing is the application of loam, sand and well-rotted organic matter to a lawn in order to correct surface irregularities and improve the texture of difficult soils. This encourages greater rooting and thickening of turf. Lawn soil (commonly known as Lawn Top Dressing) worked into your existing surface will improve the root zone of lawn grasses, as it reduces compaction and improves aeration. It encourages increased grass root activity. Increasing grass root activity will improve the ability of the lawn to withstand hard wear and drought conditions. The organic matter will also help to maintain an acid balance in the soil, which will encourage healthy turf growth and grass to thrive.

Seeding If the overall grass cover of your lawn is thin or there are noticeable bare patches around the lawn then over-seeding in the autumn is called for. Use a rake to loosen the soil surface and remove any obvious weeds or stones. Spread Lawn Soil over the lawn with the back of a rake, working it well into the surface and into any holes that have been made. The Lawn Soil should be spread evenly so that depressions are filled and no new humps are created. Choose a Grass Seed mixture suitable for your conditions and apply evenly over the lawn at about a handful per square yard. Rake into the soil surface so that the seed is covered. Keep the lawn well watered - Water the area every few days if the weather is dry. When over-seeding the lawn, it can be difficult to match the colour of a new seed mix with your existing lawn. In such circumstances it may be necessary to over-seed the whole lawn to achieve uniformity of colour and texture.

Areas of dry shade, (such as under trees), become sparse very quickly despite adequate care. Consider over-seeding on an annual basis to top up thinning areas.