

# The Garden Corner

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Like many aspects of life, success depends entirely upon timing (some would say luck too). For our fellow gardeners who have been disappointed in the performance of their lawn, September – October is one of two times during the year that you can establish a great looking lawn – the other is March – April. In my opinion, the fall option is the absolute best. So, what needs to be done?

The first step is weed control. There are many products available. My first choice is Weed B Gone Max. Spray evenly and make certain all leaf surfaces are wet. Pay particular attention to the “Warnings” about pets and children on the recently sprayed surface. Before advancing to the next step, wait at least two weeks.

Aerating your lawn is a must since most of us are blessed with clay soil which compacts nicely. The movement of mowers and people and pet traffic over the surface tamps the soil even more. I use a core aerator which penetrates the soil about two inches deep and leaves dirt plugs all over the yard. Looks hideous I know but successive rains/snows will melt them away in time. If you’re physically unable, you can rent the machine or hire the work done. A question I’m asked all the time is: How often should aeration be done? It depends upon many factors; but, if you haven’t done it in four or five years, it’s probably overdue.

Now that the weeds are gone and you’ve opened up the soil to allow water to penetrate deeper into the root zone of your lawn, it’s time to reseed or overseed. The type of grass you use is a matter of personal choice; but, if you need a recommendation: use fescue. I’ve been gardening in Missouri for thirty two years and have put in lawns for customers in a prior life as a handyman and without fail, fescue has been a proven winner. Up to you ...

Last step: fertilize! Again, the type you use is totally your choice; and there are many to choose from – “starter” types, “winterization”, “weather hardy” – the list goes on and on. If you need an idea, I use the cheapest “weed and feed” I can find. Why? It’s a very good balanced combination of ingredients which promotes healthy growth and it will kill the weeds you missed; plus – did I say it was cheap?

In closing I’m going to recommend one additional step: spring fertilization during the March and April timeframe. There is not a gardener alive who doesn’t welcome the “greening” of spring and with this application your lawn will be so green it will hurt your eyes to look at it! Use the same “weed and feed” type you used in the fall; and, yes, you’ll be mowing more because you did. Life has tradeoffs too! For your specific questions/comments write to: 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 64093 or email: [maandpak@embarqmail.com](mailto:maandpak@embarqmail.com).