

# AERATING TO PROMOTE ROOT GROWTH AND PREVENT THATCH BUILD UP

Aerating is really a simple process. It consists of perforating the soil (and any thatch above it) with small holes, which allow water, air, and nutrients to get to the roots. Leave the thin cigar shaped plugs on the lawn for a day or two allowing them to dry, then break them up with energetic raking to create a top dressing and fill in the holes.

Over seeding after aerating can produce a dense lawn and prevent erosion. Grass seed suppliers have developed grasses that are disease and insect resistant, and more tolerant to drought. By overseeding our lawns with new improved grasses we can lessen the need for herbicides and pesticides which eventually find their way into our lakes. In time these new grasses will crowd out weeds, provide a plush new lawn, and help nurse our lakes back to health.

Thatch develops when dead organic matter - grass stems, dead roots, and debris but not clippings - builds up faster than it decomposes. It also results from using pesticides that kill earthworms and microflora that break down organic matter. A thin layer (1/2 inch or less) is normal and does no harm. In fact it protects the crown and reduces soil compaction. For lawns with moderate thatch, simply aerating will do the trick.

*Roots tend to grow in thatch, where they easily succumb to environmental stresses.*

