

# Moss Removal & Lawn Care

**Moss in the lawn can be a major problem in the Lower Mainland, especially during the rainy winter months. Moss takeover is the result of several conditions. Identifying & solving these problems promptly will discourage moss growth in the future.**

## WHEN IS MOSS A PROBLEM?

Moss spores and plants exist naturally in the garden in a harmonious balance with grass. Moss only becomes a problem when the lawn can no longer compete with it. Causes of moss include: low or unbalanced soil fertility, heavy shade, compacted or wet soils, acidic soil, a thick layer of thatch \*

## CULTURAL CONTROL

Maintain a good fertilizing and watering routine. For the first feeding, we recommend a well-balanced lawn food, such as **GARDENWORKS™** Premium Lawn Fertilizer 14- 4- 8. It is best applied in late March or early April (depending on weather conditions). Later in the summer, a higher-nitrogen fertilizer, such as **GARDENWORKS™** 23 -3 -23, can be applied to stimulate green growth. Keep in mind that while fertilizing is important, do not over fertilize. During dry periods, less frequent but longer periods of watering will produce deeper, healthier roots. Amend compacted or wet soils. Lawn roots thrive in healthy soil that drains well and has ample organic matter. Poor soil will not drain well and this encourages moss growth. To correct compacted soil, aeration is recommended. Aeration is the removal of soil plugs which will allow air to penetrate directly to the root zone. The added oxygen encourages soil microbes to break down organic matter, such as thatch. These holes also allow water to penetrate more easily. At this time, we recommend applying **GARDENWORKS™** Lawn soil and top dressing which will fill these holes with well drained, nutrient enriched soil. In severe situations, you may have to regrade the area or install drainage tiles.

If your lawn is shaded by trees, thin the canopy to let in more light or sow shade-tolerant lawn seed in these areas. We recommend **GARDENWORKS™** Shadylawn. In some areas you may decide to replace the lawn with shade-tolerant ground covers. Acidic soil does not allow grass to take up key nutrients that it needs to grow, and in addition, moss thrives in acidic soils. Have your soil tested before applying lime to correct the problem. We recommend using dolomite lime to lower the soil pH. Dolopril, a brand of lime, is granulated

dolomite lime that has been pelletized for easier application. Note: After applying lime to your lawn, ensure that it is watered in.

Thatch problems are the result of over fertilizing and leaving long grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. If the thatch is more than 2.5cm thick, it hampers water penetration to the root zone.

For a spot thatch problem, rake the area with a stiff lawn rake and remove the thatch. For large areas, use a dethatcher (usually rented) to spare your back. You can also purchase dethatcher spring attachments that fasten to the blades of a power lawn mower. Dethatching should be done in early spring or early fall so that the lawn has a chance to recuperate before weed seeds germinate. To avoid thatching problems, do not over fertilize with nitrogen and do not leave the lawn unmown too long.

For control of severe moss problems, a moss control fertilizer should be considered. **GARDENWORKS™** 14-4-8 with Moss Control will kill the moss and encourage strong lawn growth to take over the bald spots (an application of moss killer/fertilizer mix should be applied in mid-spring or early fall). Make sure to follow the directions on the label closely. Also, take care while spreading near pavement and the house to avoid staining the cement.

The lawn should stay dry for approximately forty-eight hours after applying the moss killer, after which a thorough watering is required. In seven to ten days the moss will turn black, at which time you should hand-rake or dethatch your lawn. This will remove the dead moss and allow the grass to grow again. If bare or thin patches result from moss removal, reseed the area with one of our **GARDENWORKS™** lawn seed blends.

Remember, a thick, healthy lawn is less likely to allow moss and weeds to become established.

\*Thatch is a layer of dead grass that has not decomposed; it inhibits water, air & fertilizer penetration into the root area.