

5 Simple Steps To A Successful Lawn.

Anne Gachuhi, Founder & CEO, Home Gardening Support Network

Web: <u>www.homegardeningsupportnetwork.com</u>

Maintaining a lawn can be a lot of work. This session discusses the

Five (5) Simple Steps to a healthy lawn:



Step 1. Decide on the types of Turfgrass To Plant

Warm season turfgrasses in Hawaii include:

- *** Zoysiagrass*** (most wear tolerance)
- **❖ Seashore paspalum*** (most salt tolerant)
- **❖ Bermudagrass** -(most drought tolerant)

- ❖ Hybrid Bermudagrass highest maintenance requirement, need frequent mowing and nitrogen fertilizer
- **❖ Buffalograss-** *Most drought tolerant grass*
- **Centipedegrass**-low maintenance
- St. Augustine's grass (Most Shade tolerant)

Step 2. Start With Soil Improvement and Fertilization

- ❖ Adding organic matter and proper fertilization are critical to a good lawn
- ❖ Fertilizer application in general is about ½ lb of Nitrogen per month per 1000 sq. feet for most grasses.
- * Reduce fertilization in the winter months

Step 3. Proper Watering Strategies

- ❖ The biggest mistake done by a lot of home gardeners is to water their turf/grass daily briefly for 3-5 minutes.
- ❖ Light daily irrigation promotes shallow rooting in turf, encourages disease and weed invasion, thatch accumulation and soil compaction
- Irrigating deeply and infrequently is a better strategy
- * Too much water is as bad as too little water.
- ❖ On average, about 1 inch of irrigation per week is adequate.

Step 4. Mowing Practices

Specific mowing height depends on:

- Mowing frequency, type of grass, its location, use, and maintenance level.
- ❖ On average, mowing height for:
- ❖ Zoysia grasses is about ½ 1 inch
- ❖ Seashore passpalum is about ¾ inch 1 inch
- ❖ Avoid mowing more than 1/3 of the grass at any time.
- Mowing frequency depends on the grass growth rate. On average for home gardeners mowing frequency is between 7-14 days.

Step 5. Thatch Control

- Thatch is a Layer of living and dead organic matter that occurs between the green vegetation or live grass & the soil surface.
- It's Composed of roots, stems, rhizomes, stolons with large amounts of lignin.

Too much thatch could be caused by:

- Too much water
- Too much fertilizer
- Poor mowing habits
- An over-reliance on chemicals.

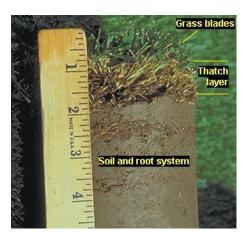


Photo -University of California (UC-IPM)

❖ All turfgrasses should be mechanically dethatched when the thatch layer is greater than ½ inch.



- ❖ Periodic dethatching with a power rake or verticutting should be done in the spring followed by fertilization and irrigation.
- Consider mechanical aeration using a core aerator or spoon aerator for turfgrasses in:
 - Heavy soils
 - Those receiving significant traffic
 - Those undergoing intense use.