



# Turf Times

Summer 2004

## Aeration... Key to Healthy Lawn

If there is one thing you can do in the fall to help ensure a healthy, green lawn next year, it is definitely aeration. We recommend this service so highly that we're willing to take the risk of overloading you with information on it each fall.

When we aerate your lawn, you get a lot of bang for your buck. Simply said, core aeration helps your lawn get extra mileage out of all the other materials we apply during the growing season. It also helps your lawn make the most of the natural nutrients in the soil and environment.

Water reaches the roots of the plants more easily after core aeration. Fertilizer penetrates the soil with ease, boosting the health of your root system.

### Here's What Happens

Over time, thatch can build up on the surface of your lawn. These dead roots and stems can accumulate into a thick layer that prevents the nutrients from reaching the roots of the grass. Thatch can also inhibit the effectiveness of fertilizers and pest controls, especially if it exceeds about half an inch.



In addition to thatch, soil can become compacted from heavy traffic. Even moderate rain or watering can cause the soil to pack tightly around grass roots. Soil with substantial clay content also tends to become easily compacted.

The lawns of new homes can be affected too. It doesn't take more than a couple of years under the right conditions for thatch to build up and compaction to be well on its way. New homes are often built on land where top soil has been removed and the soil underneath is compacted during lot clearing.

### A Simple Remedy

Aeration is the process of removing thousands of soil cores from your lawn and depositing them above the thatch layer. The cores are about a half-inch in diameter and 2" to 3" long. It's a simple procedure, but as soon as it's performed, a lot of good things begin happening to your lawn.

The holes created by aeration trap water and fertilizer. This encourages the grass roots to grow toward the holes.

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## President's Message



2004 has been an interesting year for us at One Step. Our goal of providing superior customer service while controlling costs has been a real challenge.

Over the past several years, we have faced substantial increases in our insurance rates for our business, workman's compensation, and vehicles. We have faced double digit increases for the last few years in our medical insurance, which we provide as a benefit to our employees. We have faced fuel costs that have risen to all-time highs and have seen increases in material costs that have exceeded our expectations. We have had to deal with new industry regulations that have increased costs for sign posting and notification. All this came on top of a very wet year that has made keeping on schedule a real challenge.

Through all of these changes, we have been able to limit price increases to three percent or less for more than ten years. We have been able to do this by retaining quality employees, improving customer retention, getting competitive quotes for products, preventing equipment failures with good maintenance programs, improving new employee training, restructuring our programs, experimenting and utilizing more productive equipment, improving our computer and phone systems, and probably many more improvements

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# President's Message

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that I have forgotten.

All of this is important to keep our company profitable at a time when costs have increased. We will continue to look for new ways to make us highly productive without losing our focus on superior customer service. We will be implementing a few minor procedures for the next season that will help us to reach these goals.

One change you may notice will be with our renewal procedure. We dedicate a lot of time and effort into renewing you as our customer for the upcoming season. We use this information to help us plan for material and equipment purchases and planning the size of the staff we may need for the upcoming season. The sooner we know these numbers the better we can plan, and that means a savings to our company and of course our customers.

With your fall visit we will be leaving you a coupon that will ask you to please renew your service with us for next season now. By doing this you will be given an incentive on your price and will be helping us keep costs down.

If you know that you will be using the service next year, why not save us and yourself some money by filling out the card now or by just calling our office and letting us know your plans.

When I say that we are doing our best to keep costs down without sacrificing quality, you can trust that I'm keeping that promise.

If you have any other suggestions, I'd like to hear them. Please feel free to jot me a note either in writing or e-mail at [bottley@rochester.rr.com](mailto:bottley@rochester.rr.com) or call me at 585-594-1095. I'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,



## Make Time for Fall Tree & Lawn Chores

The benefits can be huge if you take the time to do a few simple things for your trees and lawn this fall. By preparing them properly for winter, they'll be prettier, greener, more disease resistant and have more blooms next spring.



### Rake, Rake, Rake

Instead of letting leaves continue to pile up on your lawn until they've all fallen, rake and remove them more regularly to keep them from smothering the grass. This also prevents an early snow from sneaking up on you and matting the leaves. In spring these leaf piles can cause unsightly snow mold.



### Need to Feed

The fall is an ideal time to give shrubs and trees a deep root feeding. This gives them extra nutrients to winter over and be ready for full springtime bloom.



### Plant Bulbs

Remember to get new bulbs in the ground before it's too frozen to work. The spring will be so much brighter with a yard full of daffodils, hyacinths, tulips and crocuses.



### Aerate the Lawn

The importance of aeration just can't be stressed enough. It truly helps your lawn rebound from winter quickly and get a great start on the growing season.

## One Step Goes to Washington

Bob Ottley and area representatives Lance Pinckney and Amy Chick joined hundreds of Professional Lawn Care Association (PLCAA) volunteers in Arlington, VA for a day of service at the Arlington National Cemetery. The event was held to honor those Americans who have made the ultimate sacrifice and to provide the cemetery with a gift of labor and expertise from green industry professionals. Senator John Sununu (R-NH) addressed the group at the opening ceremony.



Volunteers pruned trees and shrubs, fertilized, mulched and performed other needed tasks to help improve the green spaces at the cemetery. Sod was installed on the most recent grave sites as well as at the Kennedy Memorial.

The volunteer project is part of PLCAA's annual Legislative Day. While in Washington, PLCAA members met with their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill to discuss important issues facing the industry. This year's topics included the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program funding and the H-2B guest worker program. The One Step contingency met with staff members of Congressman Reynolds (R-NY).

## A GLIMPSE INSIDE

# Harry Radley's Two Decades of Service

Twenty years with the same company. It's quite an accomplishment, especially considering the ever-changing employment situation in most area businesses. It's a particularly notable achievement for a small company.

But Harry Radley has grown with One Step. Since 1984 he has seen many changes during One Step's growth, yet the company has in other ways stayed the same.

"We've always been focused on customer service," explained Harry. "The ways we achieve that may have changed over the years, but it's still our number one priority."

In 1984 after a short stint with Kodak, Harry became the sixth One Step employee. He trained to become a lawn care technician and first worked on residential property. When the company added the commercial property division, Harry worked there for a few years. Harry's mechanical expertise was needed to help maintain equipment and vehicles, so eventually he began working full-time in maintenance.

Today, Harry maintains a fleet of 25 or so vehicles. When new trucks are purchased, he outfits them with tanks and other equipment, so the area representatives have the best tools to take care of both residential and commercial properties.

In addition to equipment and vehicle maintenance, Harry keeps One Step's buildings in working order. He might be seen one day loading lawn materials on trucks and the next day he'll be refinishing the maintenance building floor.

Although the lawn care territories have grown from four to 12 and there are about 30 employees at the height of the season, Harry says the atmosphere at One Step has been the same for 20 years.

"One Step has always been a family-oriented business," commented Harry. "It's a little harder to know 30 employees and their families as compared to the six employees 20 years ago, but we still work together like a family. Our ideas and opinions are heard and respected and we're given the reigns of responsibility for our jobs. And for a small company, the benefits such as health insurance are great."

When Harry isn't working, he and his family often return to the Thousand Islands area where he grew up. He and his wife enjoy taking their three sons jet skiing and relaxing on the lake. They also spend a lot of time at soccer games with their two younger boys.



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Meanwhile, the soil cores begin to dissolve during watering and mowing. This soil mixes with the thatch and helps it to decompose, preventing excessive thatch build up.

The compacted soil also loosens up, allowing more oxygen to reach the grass roots. The roots grow deeper without hitting hard soil, so they're sturdier.

In addition to these short-term results, the benefits over the long haul are significant if you regularly aerate. You'll notice the improved resistance to stress next summer. You'll also enjoy a more resilient, cushioned lawn that's ideal for playing, walking and relaxing.

Give us a call today. We'll schedule an aeration visit. We know you'll be pleased with the results.



## Christmas Décor

Since we already visit your property a number of times each year, why not add a couple more stops? We'll decorate the outside of your home for the holidays in late November or early December. Then we'll come back after the first of the year to take the decorations down and properly store them until next year.



Imagine a professionally lit home with wreaths, garland and bows without having to lift a finger! Enjoy the holidays and let us take care of your outside decorating needs. Call early to reserve your date.

## Thanks for the Referrals!

Word of mouth is our number one way to reach new customers. We appreciate every time you tell a neighbor, friend or relative about our services.

Congratulations to our monthly winners of free fall fertilization. Your names were drawn from those of all our customers who gave us referrals.

**April** B. Conner - Chili  
**May** A. Guest - Penfield

**June** D. Hurley - Rochester  
**July** C. Hutton - Hilton

**August** L. Angeline - Scottsville

# Understanding Tree Disease and Prevention

The tree disease triangle is a great tool for understanding tree diseases and the best ways to prevent and control them. The triangle clearly illustrates how to break the disease cycle with sound horticultural practices or pathogen removal.

A disease is possible if the three triangle criteria are present.



On one side of the triangle is plant material susceptible to a particular pathogen. The pathogen forms side two of the triangle. The third side of the triangle is the specific environment or cultural condition at the site.

✿ **Plant** ✿ The host tree, pathogen and environment join forces to create a problem. By breaking a side of the triangle, the chances are greatly increased for disease control.

## Triangle Side One... The Plant

Take advantage of information from nurseries and agricultural extension services about disease-resistant plants. Consider the specific diseases a plant can tolerate in relationship to the site in which it will be planted. Choose the specific varieties which are compatible with the planting sites.

Proper soil preparation, fertilization and planting give trees the best possible start. In addition to planting instructions attached to trees, check web sites or ask a One Step tree expert how best to plant the particular varieties chosen.

Be sure to create a good growing environment for trees. Learn about all the aspects of tree care including pruning, leaf raking, watering, mulching, fertilizing, plant compatibility, aerating, cone removal and weed control.

## Triangle Side Two... The Environment

Be aware of weather conditions, watering methods, soil requirements, space requirements, sun/shade conditions and

the like which will affect trees after planting. Specific pathogens thrive when specific conditions are present, so be aware of which ones might affect particular trees.

Combine the proper solution with the specific problem. Remove mulch volcanoes and the moisture which could lead to decay may be eliminated. Thin plants out and it might reduce powdery mildew. Irrigate in the early morning and it may give plants the change needed to fight disease.

## Triangle Side Three... The Pathogen

Find out about fungal, viral and bacteria pathogens. Understand how they are introduced into landscapes by insects, rain, wind, soil, mulch and plants. Study the signs of disease. Compare healthy leaves to those with spots, holes or other signs of stress. Check trees regularly for signs of pathogens or diseases.

Learn about the variety of treatments for tree diseases. Pruning affected twigs and destroying them may be more effective than applying a fungicide. Watering from below rather than top irrigation may reduce blight on junipers.

In some cases, no treatment is the best remedy, especially when a disease is simply esthetically unappealing and not life-threatening to the tree. It also can become too late in the growing season for a treatment to be effective.

By choosing the right trees for specific locations, planting them properly, maintaining a healthy environment, inspecting the trees regularly and learning about tree diseases, most trees will be healthy enough to defend themselves against diseases. If after the best possible efforts, trees still get diseased, One Step's tree and shrub experts can step in to help. Call the Division Manager, Rich Nelson, for assistance.



**ONE STEP**

**TREE & LAWCARE**

4343 Buffalo Road  
North Chili, NY 14514  
(585) 594-1095

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