

## A Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On

It's that time of year again... time to shake the soil loose, make lots of holes, scatter soil plugs and beef up the grass for the next growing season. Yes, aeration is one of the best tools we have to combat the stresses of summer and help turf get the best possible nourishment to head into winter and thrive next spring.

Aeration is just as important as mowing, controlling weeds and insects, watering and fertilizing. It helps to control excessive thatch buildup, improve soil structure, create growth pockets for new roots, and open the way for water and fertilizer to get to the roots of your lawn. And since aeration complements the other services your lawn receives, the benefits will continue for months to come.

### Why Aerate?

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 proper nutrients from reaching the roots of the grass. It can also inhibit the effectiveness of fertilizers and pest controls. Thatch that exceeds about half an inch can cause additional maintenance and pest problems.

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.

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## President's Message



I've been asked many times over this past summer, "What are you going to do about this new 48-hour notification law?" I have answered that question just as I have answered previous questions about obstacles we've encountered in the operation of our business. Once we know the rules of the game we will play and play hard!!

The 48-hour notification law that was passed in Monroe County will require licensed professional applicators such as One Step to notify neighbors of our customers at least 48 hours in advance of a liquid pesticide application on their lawns or trees. Industry professionals fought hard to defeat this bill locally.

Our case was based on the science regarding the use of pesticides. The facts consistently show that pest control products when properly applied present no unnecessary risks. There are already laws addressing the concerns raised by those in favor of this legislation. Additional regulation was unnecessary. However, emotions and feelings instead of sound science prevailed. Unfortunately we lost!

I am not about to waste your time or mine debating what went wrong, feeling sorry for ourselves or being angry at the legislators. I am simply going to get down to the business of doing what we have done at One Step for nearly 30 years.

As soon as the law passed, I pulled together key people in our company to begin to get a handle on how we would comply with this new law. These folks talked to other people in our company and together we focused on the following goals:

1. The level of service that our customers deserve and expect will not be lowered.
2. We will not break the law. We must comply with the rules.
3. Costs need to be contained in providing this extra service to the neighbors.

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## Fall Fertilization Helps Lawns Recover



The hot dry weather we have experienced so far this season has put some additional stress on the average lawn. Fall is the time of year when the lawns begin to recover from this stress and prepare for the upcoming winter. Cooler temperatures and increased moisture help considerably in this process.

There can be some additional benefits from late fall fertilization as the lawns prepare for winter. Fall fertilizer should be applied when the grass begins to slow down its leaf growth. In upstate New York, this is typically mid-October.

The idea is not to encourage further leaf growth, but to provide adequate nutrients for the root system. It is important to note that the root system will remain active up until the ground begins to freeze. Fertilization applied at this time can be stored by the root system to help stimulate root development during the dormant period as well as help to prepare the plant for growth next spring.

Fall fertilization allows the plant to accumulate carbohydrate reserves in the stems, rhizomes, and stolons. These reserves will help turf to resist winter injury and disease as well as to provide a source of energy for root growth the following spring.

Why not give your lawn a little extra insurance by scheduling a fall fertilization today?

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Another reason to aerate this year is that the summer has been excessively dry. Plants have become stressed from the lack of water. Aeration will help tremendously in getting grass to recover from these drought conditions.

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. And even if they weren't a factor, lawns at new homes are often started on soil that was compacted to begin with because the rich topsoil was removed when the lot was cleared for building.

### What is Aeration?

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 two to three inches 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 catch water and fertilizer. This encourages the grass roots to grow toward the holes, getting greener and thicker along the way.

Meanwhile, the soil cores begin to dissolve during watering and rainfall. 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.

### Aeration Means a Greener, Healthier Lawn

The bottom line is that aeration is truly effective in making lawns thicker and greener with less thatch and fewer weed and insect problems. It also helps grass resist hot, dry weather.

Call us today for an estimate and an appointment. We're sure you'll be delighted with the results.

## Growing on the Job

**Jeff Plummer**, our Lawn Care Division Trainer, recently earned the Certified Turfgrass Professional-Cool Season Lawns (CTP-CSL) designation. Jeff passed the Virginia-based Professional Landcare Network's intensive course of study including two proctored exams.

The certification process covers all aspects of caring for the varieties of turf used in cool season lawns. Aeration, fertilization, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), lawn renovation and the safe application of weed controls are included.

Jeff has been with One Step for seven years. He began as a lawn care representative and has been in his current position for the past two years.

**Tony Mancini**, who has been with One Step for three years, made a transition from the Lawn Care Division to the Tree and Shrub Care Division. Tony joined Rich Nelson and our other tree and shrub experts at the beginning of this year's season.

## Drought Stresses Trees and Shrubs

The lack of rain this summer may have stressed trees and shrubs. The signs of stress include leaf scorch, wilting, premature coloration and leaf drop. Left unchecked, these plants become more susceptible to insect damage and disease. They also may suffer freezing damage and dieback this winter.

To combat these conditions try some of these remedies:

- Irrigate the plants thoroughly and slowly. This allows the water to penetrate the soil rather than run off the surface. Try using a drip container such as Treegater® or a large bucket with tiny holes drilled in the bottom. A soaker hose also will do the job.
- Mulch plants with a three—or four-inch layer of organic material. This helps retain moisture and reduce weed problems.
- Inspect plants for insects and diseases and remedy them as required.
- Prune dead plant material.
- Fertilize only when the soil is adequately moist to avoid fertilizer burn.



## Deep Root Tree & Shrub Fertilization



Many customers have inquired about ways to bolster their trees and shrubs for the winter. One of the best ways to ensure plant health is to give them deep root fertilizations. If you haven't already scheduled an appointment, give us a call.

## 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.



## More Troops Benefit From Free Lawn Care Service



Several years ago One Step decided to offer free lawn care service to the families of military personnel whose duty took them out of the country. The idea has now spread to other lawn care services in Ohio that learned about One Step's program from owner Bob Ottley.

One Step has provided free lawn care services to about 100 families in the Rochester area over the past three seasons.

## President's Message

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As of this writing we have been able to reach all of the objectives stated above. Through the thoughts of many like minds, we are certain that our service will be as good as ever, our people will be following the laws and we will keep costs to a minimum.

I have always said that if you tell me the rules, I'll figure out a way to play the game. This time I believe we can play the game so that we all can win.

Sincerely,



# Repair Summer Damage Before the Snow Flies



This has been a great summer so far for outdoor activities. The warm dry weather has been great for picnics, parties and backyard barbecues. It's been fun, but there will likely be some damage to lawns as a result of higher traffic and less rain.



When more moderate temperatures return and the fall rains begin, most lawns will begin to recover from the heat and drought. In some cases they'll need a little help.

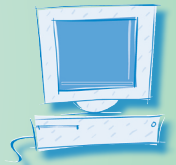
As the lawns begin to green up again, you will be able to determine where the damage has occurred. The easiest way to tell will be to give a tuft of grass a little tug. If the grass pulls out easily, it could be dead. If grass holds fast, then it should recover.

For those areas that are damaged, the repair can be quite simple.

- ✓ Lightly rake the damaged area to loosen the soil to a depth of about half an inch. 
- ✓ If the damaged area has significant thatch, apply a light layer of topsoil approximately one-half inch before seeding.
- ✓ Seed with a good mixture of Kentucky Bluegrass and Perennial Ryegrass. Apply the seed at a rate of 3-5 lbs per 1000 square feet. 
- ✓ After sowing the seed, lightly roll or simply walk on the area to help insure good "seed to soil" contact.
- ✓ The most important thing at this point is to water. New seed must be kept damp for 3-4 weeks. This means daily watering, sometimes more than once. Do not water to the point of making puddles. Simply keep the soil moist.
- ✓ New grass should begin to sprout in about 10 days.



*We're always eager to hear from you whether it's good or not so good news. It's the best way we know to stay on top of the service we provide, so stay in touch!*



***Look for next season's renewal notice the next time we're at your property!***



**ONE STEP**

**TREE & LAWNCARE**

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

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