



LAWN MOSS

Can Lawn Moss be permanently eradicated?

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Moss:

Due to our seasonal weather patterns, lawn moss is a permanent fixture in the Pacific Northwest climate. There is currently no registered liquid pesticide for its control. Why? It costs \$200 million to register a pesticide with the EPA. Lawn moss is an ornamental pest, and anything that kills a pest is categorically a pesticide. So far, the industry has not, and probably never will, develop a pesticide to kill lawn moss. Lawn moss is primarily a regional issue, and there's simply not enough profit to be made to make it worthwhile to invest in moss control product development.

Ferrous sulfate (iron):

Ferrous sulfate (iron), a component of fertilizer, will damage moss if applied at a high rate. We add ferrous sulfate to our fertilizer mixes all year, to promote color and chlorophyll production in the lawn. But, even at high rates, ferrous sulfate won't eradicate moss, nor should we expect it to. Like death and taxes, as the saying goes, moss will always be around. Moss germinates from spores cast from the adult plants as they mature. After high-iron fertilizer applications, the visible moss plants turn dark and begin to shrink in size, but if wet conditions prevail, those spores will germinate and new moss plants will begin to grow almost immediately.

Mechanical removal:

Mechanical removal, by hand raking or with a dethatching machine, is a quick way to eliminate most of the existing lawn moss. **However, moss will grow back.** Maintaining healthy turf and soil with proper fertilizer, irrigation, aerating and overseeding (more grass plants, less room for moss) will help keep moss out of the lawn. In shady areas, overseeding should be done annually. Our office has referrals for companies who provide overseeding service.

Lime:

Contrary to what you may have heard, lime will not control or prevent lawn moss. Prescription lime application will correct acidic soil, improving the ability of grass plants to assimilate nutrients through their roots and perform better. We do NOT recommend liming your lawn without a current pH test showing the need. We can test for you if you don't have a current reading.

Expectations:

The bottom line is: you can expect to see lawn moss Fall through Spring, especially if your lawn is thin, shady, or poorly drained, and even more so during years of frequent rainfall and cool temperatures (like this one!). High iron fertilizer programs help minimize the accumulation of moss, but we can not expect moss to disappear forever; it's just not going to happen.

Turn over for weed grass information...





WEED GRASS

Can Weed Grass be permanently prevented?

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Weed Grasses:

Weed grass invasion is common in our area and will occur quickly, even in new sod lawns. The most prevalent weed grass types are annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), quackgrass and bentgrass.

How they get started:

The dominant species of grass sold as seed and grown on sod farms in this area is perennial ryegrass. Because it is a bunch grass that doesn't spread, there is vacant soil between the plants, where weed grass and broadleaf weeds can, and will, germinate.

The invaders either germinate from seed, as with annual bluegrass, or from underground growth parts called rhizomes that may be in the on-site soil at planting, or in imported topsoil. Without fumigation, these rhizomes will grow into visible plants. Unfortunately, even with a perfect start, new lawns will have visible weed grasses within the first three years without steps to keep them out.

Solutions:

- Continue a high quality fertilizer and pest management program (like the Greenskeeper Plus program) to keep the turf in top shape.
- Aerate, top-dress with sand, and over-seed yearly to keep the grass plant population high. **This is very important!** We have recommendations for local firms that provide these services.
- Stay ahead of young weed grasses by pulling and/or spot treating with RoundUp®.*
- Have Wolbert's treat with pre-emergence herbicides 2-3 times each year to minimize germination. This will significantly reduce chance of invasion, but won't completely eliminate it, so spot treatment or pulling will still be necessary occasionally.

* We sell a tool called "Weed Wand" for approximately \$30, delivered to your door, that makes the spot treatments easy. The wand can be filled with RoundUp® herbicide solution, and then it's a simple process of pressing the sponge tip on the weed grass. It kills an area about the size of a silver dollar with one press of the tube. We'll deliver one to you, just give us a call.

Turn over for moss information...



Quackgrass



Poa annua "bluegrass"