

Verti-cutting

Why verti-cut?

Verti-cutting, or vertical mowing, is the process of mechanically removing thatch build up in your lawn. Thatch is the layer of dead biomass (e.g. stems and roots) between the soil and the green grass.

Thatch facts

Thatch that is less than 1/2" is beneficial to the lawn because it shades and cools the crowns of the turf grass plants and helps the lawn be more resilient and can reduce the compaction resulting from heavy use. Thatch that is thicker than 1/2" impedes water and fertilizer penetration, reduces pesticide effectiveness, and can harbor harmful insects and disease organisms. Lawns with heavy thatch have a spongy feel. Moisture in thatch will evaporate more quickly than moisture in soil, so water doesn't reach the soil. Further, grass roots will begin to grow in the thatch layer, making the lawn less drought resistant.

How thatch develops

Grass with vigorous growth habits, in sunnier areas, and lawns on a high fertility program build up thatch more rapidly. Thatch will also accumulate when the soil pH is too high or too low, when grass is cut infrequently or when it is too tall, and when there is soil compaction. Core aeration is effective in managing lower amounts of thatch, but may not completely manage a lawn with thatch problems.

De-tatching process

To remove thatch we use a process called verti-cut-

ting, which is similar to de-thatching. A verti-cutter can be used on all types of turfgrass, while a de-thatcher will damage certain types of grass. The fixed blades on the verti-cutter cut deep into the thatch layer; pull up the thatch; and leave it on the lawn. The thatch is then removed from the surface. While vigorously raking the lawn by hand would accomplish a similar result, verticutting is less labor intensive, more cost effective and does not damage the tissue of the remaining, healthy turf grass. Lawns that have thatch layers of 1/2" or more may require more extensive renovations.

Any mechanical process of removing thatch may cause some damage to remaining turfgrass. Core aeration does not damage the turf and may be effective in controlling minor thatch accumulations.

The frequency

Verti-cutting once per year on more actively growing lawns minimizes excessive thatch build up. Creeping bent lawns or lawns that are very active may need two verti-cuttings a year. Verti-cutting is often performed when renovating a lawn or prior to slit-seeding and often in conjunction with aerating. Combining overseeding with verti-cutting helps to fill in areas of the lawn that were weak or thin, providing optimal results for the lawn.



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