

Takeaway Tips: Healthy Yards, Healthy Pets

October 16, 2018

Pet Pantry Warehouse

Purchase Street, Rye



Reduce Grassy Areas

Reducing grassy turf to just the areas the people and animals in your household use to walk and play on is the best strategy for a healthy yard. Grass turf can contribute to stormwater runoff and flooding. Grass turf requires more maintenance (mowing, seeding, watering) than other yard areas. To reduce grass, expand borders and beds using native or non-invasive plantings.

Improve the Health of the Soil

Organic matter, including compost, mulched/shredded leaves and grass clippings, will benefit any type of soil; it lightens soil that is heavy in clay, and builds humus in sandy soils, which helps retain water and nutrients. Organic matter will help to naturally aerate your soil and prevent soil compaction.

Don't Blow! Rake Leaves, Grass Clippings, Debris

Leaf blowers, especially gas-powered models, pollute the air, cause hearing damage, contribute to soil compaction, blow away valuable topsoil and damage plants. Alternatives to using a leaf blower include leaving leaves alone in garden beds, raking and composting leaves that land on turf, and using a mulching mower to shred and disperse leaves and grass clippings.

Overseed in Spring and Autumn

Overseeding involves planting new grass seed over existing grass to create a dense lawn. A thick, thriving lawn is the best weed deterrent. To overseed, mow grass low and rake away debris so seed can contact the soil. Follow directions on seed mix. Keep seed moist to encourage germination. Once seeds have sprouted, follow normal watering schedule.

Choose a Locally Adapted Grass

Grasses vary in the type of climate they prefer, the amount of water and nutrients they require, how much shade they can tolerate, and the degree of wear they can withstand. Ask your local garden center to recommend the grass that is best adapted to your area.

Mow Often, But Not Too Short

Mowing grass too short causes surface roots to become exposed, dries out soil faster, and reduces surface aeration. Avoid cutting off more than one-third of grass at any one time. Most turfgrass species are healthiest when kept between 2.5 and 3.5" tall. When lawn is finished growing for the season, cut it to about 2" to minimize risk of mold build-up during winter.

Water Deeply, Not Too Often

Thorough watering encourages grass to develop deep root systems, which make a lawn hardier and more drought-resistant. Let the lawn dry out before re-watering. When watering, put a cup in the sprinkler zone; it should get at least 1" (2.5cm) water. Most healthy lawns require only 1" of water per week. Water in the early morning to avoid loss of water to evaporation.

