

How Alternating Lawn Mowing Patterns can Benefit Your Lawn

Do you strive for the perfect lawn? Do you want your lawn to rival even the best kept baseball diamond outfield, soccer field and golf green (before a game, of course)? Have you gotten down to measure individual blades of grass to make sure they are the same height? OK, maybe that's going a bit far, but you know what I mean. Some of us take extreme pride in the condition of our lawn and the way it looks. We want folks to drive by and 'ooh' and 'aahh' at the shape and symmetry of a perfectly manicured yard. There are several things you can do that will help your yard look healthy and ready for the most highly paid sports star.

Lawn Memory

When you brush or comb your hair in the same way, over and over again, it gains a memory and begins to fall in the same way. Lawns are the same when they are mowed in the same direction and pattern over and over again. Not only will the grass lay in the same direction but small ruts can start to appear in the soil from the wheels of your mower. The tires and the weight of your mower push down and compact the soil into ruts that follow your typical mowing pattern. This can be especially true of you mow when the grass and ground are wet.

Alternate Directions

Most of us follow a pattern when we mow that is the easiest and quickest way to complete the job. We fall into a routine and think nothing else about it. It's important to remember, though, that blades of grass are like leaves on a tree. They take in the sun and, through the process of photosynthesis, nourish the plant. When grass is forced to lay in only one direction, it loses some of its ability to gain the sun because only one side of the blade is being used. Simply changing the direction that you mow can help the grass lay in a different way or even stand up straighter. Not only will this help the grass remain healthy, it will make your yard look fuller.

Alternate Patterns

The pattern that you mow your yard in should be varied every week. Actually, the best thing to do is to develop four or five patterns and use them consistently through the summer in rotation. That is, if your yard is large enough. Some side yards and small sections of yard can make it tough to use different patterns. In these cases, make sure to at least go in different directions, as mentioned above. For the larger sections of yard, try to make sure that the patterns you use are at least at ninety degree angles to each other. 45 degree angles are best. Not only will this help the individual blades of grass stand up straighter, it will allow you to make sure that the blades of grass are cut evenly.

It's easy to find instructions for various patterns on the internet that can make your yard look great. Alternating straight lines or creating a checker board pattern can really help your yard stand out from the neighbors'. Professional grounds keepers use rollers on the back of their mowers to help the grass lay in different directions so shades of light and dark make your straight lines or curves really stand out.

A Few Other Suggestions

Make sure that the blades on the mower are sharp. This will insure that the grass is cut cleanly and not ripped at the top. Find the best height for the particular kind of grass you have in your yard. Different species of grass will look better or worse at different lengths. Do your best not to cut off more than the top one-third of your grass and, if the clippings are small enough, it is best to leave them on your lawn as opposed to raking them up or bagging them. The clippings will decompose, returning nutrients and further nourishing your yard. Raise the height of your mower deck when the weather is hotter. If you cut your yard too short in hot weather, it may burn and die.

About the Author

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