

# Autumn Lawn Care



## Preparing lawns for winter

It's traditional to give lawns a pick-me-up in **September**, to revitalise them after dry summer weather and to ensure they are fit enough to get through winter. However, with longer summers and lack of water in areas hit by hosepipe bans, it's best to hold on until after some decent rain and you can see the grass is growing again.

## What to do

### Tackle moss and thatch

Start off by controlling moss, which is often found in patches under trees or hedges. Treat by spreading a **mosskiller** across the lawn and within two weeks the weed will have died and turned black.

To prevent it from thriving in the future, it makes sense to tackle its cause. Either remove branches or lower hedges that cast shade or improve drainage.

### Raking moss & leaves

Remove the dead moss by vigorously raking the surface with a **spring-tined lawn rake**. At the same time you'll remove masses of old grass clippings and other debris that can build up on the surface of the lawn, forming a layer called thatch.



Thatch can hinder drainage and encourages weeds and turf diseases.

Put the raked material on your compost heap.

If you have a large garden, it's possible to hire an electric raking machine.

Remove fallen leaves, with a **leaf rake**, to prevent damage to the grass.

### Improve drainage

Areas of the lawn that get heavy traffic, such as play areas often become very compacted that can cause problems with drainage, weeds and moss.

Improve by pushing a **hollow tined aerator** or **garden fork** into the ground as far as you can, then wiggle it backwards and forwards to make air channels. Repeat this every 10cm (4in) across the lawn.

# Autumn Lawn Care

## Aerating lawn

Brush a **sandy top dressing** across the surface of the lawn so that it fills the holes, allowing air and water into the lawn - ready mixed bags can be bought from garden centres.

On larger lawns you could hire a powered aerating machine or if your lawn is very heavy, use a **hollow tined aerator** that removes plugs of grass, which can be filled with top dressing. Both hand held and powered versions are available to buy from garden centres or to hire.

## Feed

To finish off, perk up tired lawns by giving them a feed. Use an **autumn lawn fertiliser**, which is high in phosphates and potash. This will help strong roots to develop, which will produce healthy leaves.

Don't be tempted to use a spring fertiliser. These contain high levels of nitrogen, which encourages soft, sappy leaf growth that's vulnerable to disease and could be damaged by frost.

If your lawn is in a hosepipe ban area, wait until you've had some decent rain and the grass is actively growing before carrying out any work.

## Autumn and winter aftercare

As autumn turns to winter, make the most of any dry days and rake the lawn, with a **leaf rake**, to keep it free of leaves. A thick layer of leaves will smother a lawn and weaken the grass, and it also provides winter shelter for unwelcome garden pests.

Avoid walking on your lawn if it's frosted, as this can also damage the grass.

## The HIHS Trading Centre normally stocks the following items:

- Autumn lawn fertiliser
- Mosskiller
- Spring-tined lawn rake
- Leaf rake
- Garden fork
- Sand top dressing

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/basics/techniques/lawns\\_autumnlawncare1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/basics/techniques/lawns_autumnlawncare1.shtml)