

## **5 Simple Steps To A Successful Lawn.**

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Maintaining a lawn can be a lot of work. This session discusses the Five (5) Simple Steps to a healthy lawn:



### **Step 1. Decide on the types of Turfgrass To Plant**

**Warm season turfgrasses in Hawaii include:**

- ❖ **Zoysiagrass\***- (*most wear tolerance*)
  
- ❖ **Seashore paspalum\***- (*most salt tolerant*)
  
- ❖ **Bermudagrass** -(*most drought tolerant*)

- ❖ **Hybrid Bermudagrass** – *highest maintenance requirement, need frequent mowing and nitrogen fertilizer*
- ❖ **Buffalograss**- *Most drought tolerant grass*
- ❖ **Centipedegrass**-*low maintenance*
- ❖ **St. Augustine's grass** - (*Most Shade tolerant*)

## **Step 2. Start With Soil Improvement and Fertilization**

- ❖ Adding organic matter and proper fertilization are critical to a good lawn
- ❖ Fertilizer application in general is about 1/2 lb of Nitrogen per month per 1000 sq. feet for most grasses.
- ❖ Reduce fertilization in the winter months

## **Step 3. Proper Watering Strategies**

- ❖ The biggest mistake done by a lot of home gardeners is to water their turf/grass daily briefly for 3–5 minutes.
- ❖ Light daily irrigation promotes shallow rooting in turf, encourages disease and weed invasion, thatch accumulation and soil compaction
- ❖ Irrigating deeply and infrequently is a better strategy
- ❖ Too much water is as bad as too little water.
- ❖ On average, about 1 inch of irrigation per week is adequate.

## **Step 4. Mowing Practices**

- ❖ Specific mowing height depends on:

- Mowing frequency, type of grass, its location, use, and maintenance level.
- ❖ On average, mowing height for:
- ❖ Zoysia grasses is about 1/2 - 1 inch
- ❖ Seashore passpalum is about 3/4 inch - 1 inch
- ❖ Avoid mowing more than 1/3 of the grass at any time.
- ❖ Mowing frequency depends on the grass growth rate. On average for home gardeners mowing frequency is between 7-14 days.

### **Step 5. Thatch Control**

- ❖ Thatch is a Layer of living and dead organic matter that occurs between the green vegetation or live grass & the soil surface.
- ❖ It's Composed of roots, stems, rhizomes, stolons with large amounts of lignin.

#### **Too much thatch could be caused by:**

- Too much water
- Too much fertilizer
- Poor mowing habits
- An over-reliance on chemicals.



*Photo -University of California (UC-IPM)*

- ❖ All turfgrasses should be mechanically dethatched when the thatch layer is greater than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.



- ❖ Periodic dethatching with a power rake or verticutting should be done in the spring followed by fertilization and irrigation.
- ❖ Consider mechanical aeration using a core aerator or spoon aerator for turfgrasses in:
  - Heavy soils
  - Those receiving significant traffic
  - Those undergoing intense use.