

Safety during spring cleaning

Spring cleaning in all its forms will be on the minds of many Canadians at this time of year. But have you ever really stopped to ask yourself what you can do along the way to ensure that your action items are also making improvements in your home's fire safety

for the year ahead?

Tidying up on the home front, disposing of, or recycling clothes, furniture and other unused items, cleaning up areas like the garage, garden and patio - are all obvious and practical starting points for any spring-cleaning campaign.

But don't ignore the improvements you can make in the area of home fire safety as you launch into

your annual clean-up.

One task to include is searching across the house and in the garage or storage areas for any empty or unused containers that could actually pose a fire or toxic hazard, including containers of paint, solvents, bleach and household cleaners.

If your home has a fireplace, what will you do with any unused firewood now that spring is here?

Moving wood from inside the house out to the garage or a storage area makes good sense to enhance home fire safety.

Two more fire safety 'action items' to remember are replacing the batteries in your home smoke alarms, and if your smoke alarm is more than ten years old, replace it.

Interestingly, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted earlier this year on

behalf of Duracell showed that Canadians clearly have room for improvement when it comes to considering fire safety as part of their spring cleanups. Among the usual spring-cleaning chores performed by many Canadians, the two that most directly impact home fire safety received the lowest response in the survey.

- News Canada

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To make the ground ready for building a new lawn, use a rototiller to loosen the soil. Churn the soil 4 to 5 inches deep. Rake and remove any big stones, roots or other debris.

The foundation of a good, trouble free lawn is an area which has been graded to insure proper water drainage. Establish a level grade so that no pockets remain to hold water. Spread 5 to 6 inches of peat moss or good sandy loam topsoil on top of desired fertilizer mix. Go over area again with a roto tiller to mix.

Using a rake, level tilled soil until smooth, removing any debris. Hold rake at an angle so as not to gouge the lawn resulting in holes. Work the rake in a smooth push-pull motion. The texture of the soil at this point will be very soft and fluffy. The base is too soft for a lawn. Roll soil with a roller, until firm to walk on. The final base should be firm enough that a footprint indentation is barely visible.

Now you are ready to sow the seeds. Three things to remember, use the right seed mix, sow the seed as evenly as possible and use a thin layer of soil to cover it. You can use a trough spreader or the broadcast method, using a hollow fist to spread the seed evenly. First spread half the seed in one direction and then at right angles, spread the remaining half. Rake the area with a flexible leaf rake to work the seeds into the top 1/8 inch of soil. The seeds should now be covered with a very light mulch. Mulching conserves the moisture on the soil and protects the seeds from washing away in driving rain until they have rooted. Finally, water the area with a very light fine spray and keep moist until germination.

HOW TO GROW A LAWN

Fertilizer:
We recommend a high phosphorus type fertilizer, for example 11-52-0. This may be broadcast directly over the seed at 4 lbs per 1,000 square feet or 175 - 265 lbs. /acre.

Seeding:
Sow 4 lbs per 1,000 sq. ft. or 125 - 150 lbs./acre. Cover by scuffing lightly with a rake.

PRODUCT	APPLICATION	BLEND
Lawn Mix	Top Performance	Park Kentucky Bluegrass
Varietal Blend	New Lawn & overseeding	Creeping Red Fescue
Deluxe		Perennial Ryegrass

Watering:
Never permit the soil to dry out but at the same time avoid excessive soaking until well after all seeds have germinated. Usually 30 days.

Germination:
The period required for seedings to grow varies greatly in relation to moisture supply and soil temperatures. Rye grass can germinate any time after 7 to 8 days, while Kentucky Bluegrass (the most desirable of all) can take up to 28 days, so do not stop watering until turf is well established.

Post Emergent Care:
When grass is 3 to 4 inches high, it should be cut with the mower blades set as high as possible. This cutting will also eliminate any annual weeds that have emerged from the seedbed. Close mowing should be avoided all through the first season.


Maintain Your Established Lawn:
In the spring, cool season grasses should be supplied with enough fertilizer to keep them vigorously growing. Do not over fertilize. We recommend an early spring and an early (approx. 1-1-1- ratio of nutrients, i.e. 14-16-10-11) slow release fertilizer.

Watering:
Healthy lawns required adequate watering. It is best to water early in the morning. In frequent thorough waterings are recommended over frequent short waterings.

Over seeding:
Any areas that are damaged should be top dressed with a loamy soil mixture and over seeded with an over seeding grass mixture early in spring or in fall to maintain a healthy growing lawn.

Cutting:
Cutting of a home lawn is recommended when the grass has grown 1" above the standard 3" - 4" level. It is important not to remove too much leaf area at one time. Cutting should also be done when the grass is dry. If clippings are not mulched they should be removed.

Olds Fertilizers & Sundre Soil Services An agent for Northstar Seed



Why fertilize?
There are 16 plant nutrients essential for plant growth. Most of these nutrients are supplied by the soil in quantities great enough to satisfy normal turf grass requirements. However, the demands for nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur often exceed soil supply.

Role in the plant:
Nitrogen (N) - Of all plant nutrients, nitrogen is required in the largest quantity. It affects shoot growth and density, root growth; and tolerance to disease, drought, heat and cold. With respect to appearance, nitrogen promotes rich, lush growth and a healthy dark green color.
Potassium (K) - The requirement for potassium is second only to nitrogen. It improves rooting, cold hardiness; and tolerance to disease, drought and heat.
Phosphorus (P) - Plant requirements for phosphorus are almost 1/3 that of nitrogen. Despite lower requirements, phosphorus plays a critical role in grass establishment, rooting, maturation and reproduction.
Sulphur (S) - Grass requires as much sulphur as it does phosphorus. Sulphur assists in promoting rich, lush growth and a healthy, dark green color.

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