



How to restore a tired lawn

Lawns get tired; sometimes after heavy use during the summer months, after drought, after moss and weeds have invaded over winter, or just as a result of a few years of neglect. Your lawn may look as if it is beyond help, but it is surprising how quickly you can restore it if you follow a sensible programme.

You can start to restore your lawn in early spring or in autumn when the weather is cool, and the soil is moist. Autumn is the ideal time because grass plants are more likely to produce side shoots and form clumps of leaves in the autumn whereas in spring all their energy goes into producing leaves.

First: Scarify the lawn

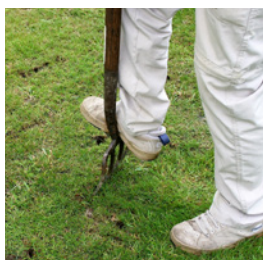
Scarifying means raking the lawn with a stiff, wire-tined lawn rake; or you can hire a mechanical scarifier. What this does is scratch through the grass plants dragging out the "thatch" and moss. The thatch is the partially dead horizontal shoots and leaves of grass which collect beneath the grass plants on the soil surface. These are very tough and tend to resist water, keeping it away from the grass roots. As thatch builds up it competes with the growing grass.



Often thatch occurs in patches causing a condition known as dry patch. Get rid of the thatch and you solve the problem.

Second: Aerate the lawn

Walking across the lawn, playing on it, pushing the wheelbarrow over it; eventually all traffic causes compaction of the soil, especially on heavy clay soils where the tiny particles are inclined to stick together. As soon as the ground is moist enough aerate the lawn by spiking it. This can be achieved using a garden fork pushed into the surface to a depth of 10-15cm (4-6inches) at frequent intervals. Alternatively you can use a lawn aerating tool or spiker.



Traditionally a lawn dressing (fine sifted soil and sand) is applied after spiking. However, on heavy soils you can achieve great results using **Vitax Clay Breaker**. This is a granular treatment you scatter across the lawn after aeration. Rake with

a plastic lawn rake and the granules drop into the holes and Clay Breaker gets to work beneath the surface conditioning the soil and improving the growing conditions for grass roots.



Third: Feed the lawn

Autumn is an excellent time to feed the lawn and strengthen it in preparation for winter. You need a lawn fertiliser that is high in potash to harden the grass growth which has slowed as the weather gets colder. The grass needs slow release nitrogen to feed it through the wet winter months.

Vitax Green Up Enhance Autumn

Lawn Feed is one of a new generation of organic based fertilisers which give long-lasting results without the risk of damage to your lawn. Enhance uses technology employed in the professional sports turf industry to give outstanding results.



Green Up Enhance contains Thatch Buster. Scarifying the lawn will have removed the worst of it. Thatch Buster's complex mix of micro-organisms, stimulants and wetting agent goes to work on the remaining thatch and breaks down the remaining dead grass layer, helping to treat and prevent the recurrence of dry patch.

The organic nutrient delivery system ensures steady release of nutrients including the high potash content required by lawns in winter.

Keep mowing

Finally, ignore any advice to pack the mower away for the winter. A rotary mower is a great way to pick up those leaves as they fall. Also light mowing, not too short may be necessary throughout autumn and winter if the weather is mild. Leaving the grass to grow long, then chopping it back in spring is not a good idea.



What you will need to create your shopping list



Clay Breaker



Green Up Enhance
Autumn Lawn Feed

Gardeners who know and trust our brands



Get in touch

For more garden inspiration and advice, visit the website at: www.gardenworld.co.uk

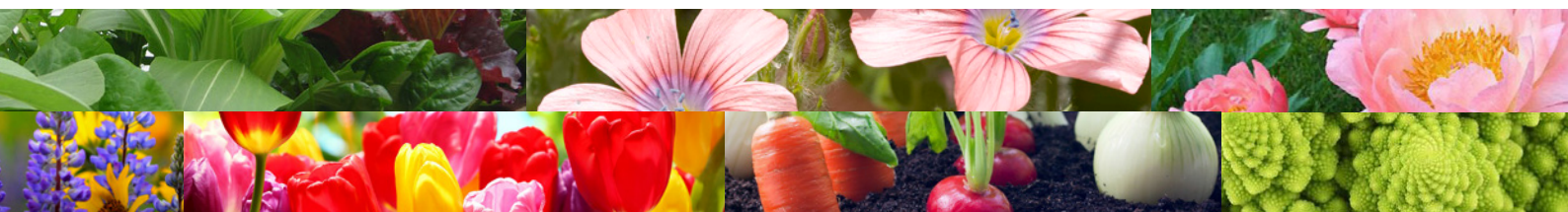
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Andy McIndoe is a practical horticulturist and author. He lectures widely to garden groups and horticultural societies, writes for various magazines and publications and is a regular on BBC local radio. His advice is based on practical experience in just about all areas of gardening from growing a few vegetables to showing orchids.

Andy designs and advises on gardens of all sizes and has been responsible for 25 Gold Medal winning exhibits at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. He and his wife Ros have a 2 acre garden, Sandhill Farm in Hampshire which is open to groups by appointment. Both keen gardeners their special interests include trees and shrubs and using pots and containers for all year round colour.



During 40 years' experience selling garden products in garden centres Andy has always recommended and used Vitax products. Vitax Q4 fertiliser is his fertiliser of choice in his own garden, his clients' gardens and his recommendation to all gardeners he advises.

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