



## Bobby Lawn Newsletter

Spring 2004

M&M's - **not** the kind you eat, Moss and Mushrooms.

### **MOSS**

Moss is a velvety green, low-growing collection of plants commonly found in shaded and damp areas of lawns. It is quite often mistaken for a species of weed but will not be controlled with a weed control product. The key to eradicate a moss problem is by understanding the conditions that caused it in the first place.

As was stated earlier, moss is usually found in shaded and damp areas. Moss thrives in areas with excessive shade, compaction, excessive moisture, high soil ph, and low or excessive fertility.

Heavy shade can be corrected by trimming branches up on a tree or by thinning the tree to allow more sunlight to enter. Areas where you are unable to do this may require you to consider planting something other than turf. One example of this would be along the north side of a building where there always will be limited sunlight.

Moisture problems can be corrected through plug aeration, raising a low spot with topsoil,

reducing the amount of water being applied to the affected area, or installing drainage. This will have a drying effect on the soil and will discourage moss growth. When watering, the sprinkler can be adjusted to prevent excessive water application to this area. Aeration will also reduce compaction.

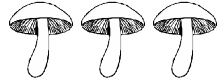
Problems with acidic soil ph can be solved with lime application. A soil test may be required to accurately determine a ph problem. Soils in our area are usually in the normal ph range of 6-7 and therefore do not require regular lime applications.

Fertilization is not only important in the overall health of your lawn but can also affect the spread of moss. Over fertilization can be as much of a problem as under fertilization. A thick stand of turf which is properly fertilized will crowd out and prevent moss problems. Bare, thin areas create an inviting environment for moss to develop.

After the conditions that created the moss problem in the first place are discovered and corrected, affected areas can be renovated by raking out the moss and sowing seed.

If shade still remains a concern, purchase a seed blend made for shaded areas. This blend will usually

contain a higher amount of Fescues. This variety usually does quite well in shaded areas. Shaded areas may require seeding on a yearly basis to maintain a thick stand.



## **MUSHROOMS**

Mushrooms are great with a steak dinner, or in a salad, but most people do not like them in their lawns. Do not sauté and eat the mushrooms that grow there!

The key to understanding why mushrooms appear in your lawn is to first look at how mushrooms are cultivated commercially. They are grown in dark covered greenhouses containing soils high in organic material, under moist conditions.

Mushroom spores in the soil will only grow when the correct conditions occur. Mushrooms usually appear in lawns after a prolonged period of damp, overcast weather. The organic matter is provided by decaying wood in the underlying soil. This wood can come from roots or stumps of trees, or building materials covered during the construction of your home.

Mushrooms will not harm your lawn and is usually a short-lived problem. Once weather conditions change, mushrooms will simply stop growing. If you find them unsightly, they can be removed by raking or mowing. There is no chemical control for mushrooms.