

Lawns for the Enthusiast!

Rob Cole

Some people don't like a manicured style, but I think that there is no doubt that a good lawn and neat edges add considerably to the look of a garden. Achieving that look, however, calls for some effort and enthusiasm.

Our own garden lawns are a mixture of old grassland and areas which were sown when we created the garden in 1999. There is no doubt that the sown areas are much better than the old grassland areas, because we carefully selected the seed to give us a range of dwarf and resilient grasses. Nevertheless, regular mowing has tamed the old grassland to an acceptable finish.

Regular mowing is definitely the key to a successful lawn - and by regular I mean at least twice a week. I set the mower (a 16" Hayter rotary with a rear roller) to cut leaving an inch of growth and I always remove the clippings in the grass box. Cutting to this length allows the roller to bend over the grass as it passes, giving you the stripes which traditionally indicate a cared-for lawn. I usually start mowing in late March and continue into late Autumn, and I always try to mow when the grass is dry. If it is even slightly wet, the clippings do not 'fly' into the collection box, but instead clog the machine.

We use a weed/feed/mosskiller product in mid-April using a Scotts Evengreen spreader when the lawn is dry, but try to ensure that rain is imminent so as to dissolve and wash in the granules. Within days of the rain arriving, the moss turns brown, the weeds begin to curl and the grass starts to green. Some years, we repeat the process in early July. To keep on top of persistent ground hugging weeds such as Clover and Black Medick I will spot treat them now and again with a selective weedkiller applied with a sprayer.

But a good lawn can easily be overshadowed by scruffy edges. Our lawns are edged by steel strip edgings, made for us by our local metalworker. They make edge cutting very precise and easy using a pair of edging shears, and I trim the edges about every second or third cut depending upon the need.

Done regularly, lawn maintenance will give you a lawn which greatly enhances your garden. You do need to be something of an enthusiast, but the better your lawn becomes, the more the enthusiasm grows.