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A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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Lawn Renovation Tips

As the summer days come to a close some areas of the lawn may show signs of stress due to heavy traffic of humans or pets, and maybe lack of water.

Most compacted areas can be renovated with a machine which pulls plugs out of the soil. This tends to loosen the soil and allows water to more readily reach the roots. We often think that water is the only ingredient needed for healthy plant life, but availability of some air is also necessary to grow a thick stand of lawn grass.

Thin areas can be overseeded. In many situations, these areas may have compacted soils so a combination of aeration, overseeding and adding enrichment products such as well-rotted manure will all help to improve the lawn environment. Overseeding should be done soon to allow plenty of time for plant establishment and development of hardiness necessary for surviving our harsh winter temperatures. If this cannot be done by the middle part of September, I suggest waiting until next spring.

If the area is, for the most part, devoid of plant growth it may be wise to till or spade the soil. At the same time, mix the soil with a layer (1/2 to 1 inch) of rotted manure or turf building material.

Moles in lawns can be very disheartening. I usually encounter them in situations where the turf appears very healthy. Moles feed on juicy grubs, bugs and worms. These food sources adore wet soils high in organic matter. The key to mole control is to keep their food source to a minimum. The first step is to practice deep watering which encourages grass roots to grow deeper. Many home owners water too frequently. Depending on daytime temperatures, lawns will require 1 to 1-1/2 inches of water per week. Applying this amount of water over two applications will tend to keep the top 3-4 inches of turf dry enough to discourage mole food.

Fungicide Increased Barley Yields

Disease, mostly of the fungal type, has been a threat to crops for many years. Most fungus organisms prefer moist and moderate temperatures to propagate. Because this area is usually characterized by low humidity, frequent weevils and barely enough rainfall to grow a crop, most producers have not given much consideration to the use of fungicides on cereals. However, based on both public and private research data and early yield reports of producers, it appears 2010 was a profitable year to apply fungicides.

Jeremy Pederson, NDSU Area Extension Crop Specialist, recently shared results of fungicide application on barley grown at the North Central Research Extension Center near Minot. The research project included eight commonly grown malting barley varieties seeded on April 23 and treated with 2 oz./acre of Tilt applied with a herbicide when the barley was in the 4-5 leaf stage and 6.5 oz. per acre of Prosaro plus .25 percent NIS applied when the barley was 50 percent headed.

The average yield of the fungicide plots were 115 bushels per acre. This compares to 92.6 bushels for the untreated plots. There also was an advantage in test weight of 1.5 pounds per bushel on the treated barley which weighed 48.1 pounds per bushel.

There was no difference in average protein content between the treated and untreated plots. Both averaged very near 12.9 percent.