

# MITREPLAN PROJECT PLANNER

## Caring for established lawns



- An easy-to-follow guide to achieving a perfect result.
- Outlines all the tools you will need for the job.
- Includes a materials checklist.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Before starting this project or buying any materials, it is worth your time to read all steps thoroughly first to be sure you understand what is required.

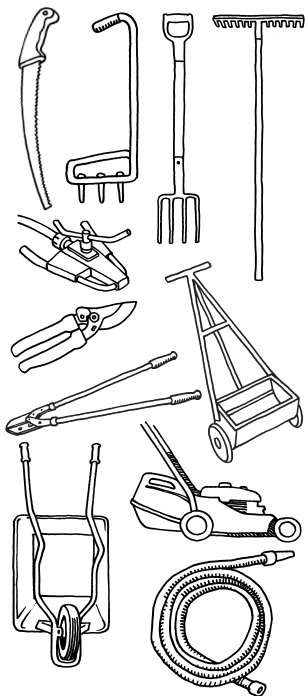
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# #51

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# MIGHTY HELPFUL™ MITRE 10

## MIGHTY TOOLS FOR YOUR MITREPLAN



Lawn mower

Fertiliser spreader  
(if required)

Garden hose & fittings

Sprinklers

Hand aerator

Digging fork

Soil pH test kit

Metal garden rake

Wheelbarrow

Secateurs

Tree branch loppers

Pruning saw

## ✓ MIGHTY HELPFUL CHECKLIST

	ORDER
Complete lawn food	
Garden lime	
Lawn seed	
Weed 'N' Feed	
Selective weedicides	
Selective pesticides	
<b>Other materials</b>	

Verbal quotes are indicative only. Written quotes on materials are available upon request from your Mitre 10 store.

## Step 7: Tree Management

Attractive gardens usually have shrubs and trees. And it's difficult to maintain a healthy lawn under them, especially if they are shallow rooted. Shade tolerant grasses such as Chewing Fescue, Creeping Red Fescue or Dichondra seed are available. However your lawn will also need extra help in these areas:

- Fertilise frequently and aerate.
- Check soil acidity with pH Test Kit. If pH is reading 6.0 or below, apply garden lime.
- Remove low lying branches to allow more sunlight through.
- Regularly remove fallen leaves and other debris.
- Surface rooted trees compete with grasses for moisture and nutrients. These can often be pruned without harming the tree - your Mitre 10 store will be happy to advise you.

## Make yours the best lawn in the street – with a little help from Mitre 10.

There are few things worse than a thin, patchy lawn. It detracts from the general appearance of your home and won't stand up to the wear and tear often demanded of it.

But a healthy, well-maintained lawn is a real pleasure and a source of pride, adding real value to your property by providing an attractive setting for your house, trees, shrubs and flowering plants.

A beautiful, lush lawn also helps to keep your home cooler during the hot summer months by reflecting heat away from it. And it is a wonderful playground for the whole family, creating a green "oasis" for sports, barbecues, and other outdoor recreational activities. So it is worth putting a little time and effort in keeping your lawn in good healthy condition by following the simple steps outlined in this MitrePlan.



The fine textures in a "green garden" of conifers is finished nicely with a lush, well maintained lawn.

## Step 1: Regular Feeding

The most important factor in achieving a lush, green lawn is to give it a regular feed. This is because lawn grasses have shallow roots, and quickly deplete the soil of nutrients. So a systematic fertilising program is essential to improve the vigour, density and the appearance of your lawn. This will also help to reduce weeds.

### What to feed

To keep a lawn healthy and growing vigorously it is necessary to use a suitable fertiliser. Not all fertilisers are the same and you should select one made specifically for lawns. They should contain the essential nutrients of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium. There is a wide range of commercial brands of fertilisers and you should talk to your Mitre 10 expert for the one that is best for your soil and location.

### When to feed

Apply fertilisers little and often, at approx. 2 to 2.5kg per 100 square metres every 6-8 weeks during the growing season. Warm Season Grasses, such as Bermuda Couch, Speedy Couch, Queensland Blue Couch, Buffalo Grass, Kikuyu Grass and Carpet Grass should be fed from spring right through to autumn. Fine Cool Season Grasses, including Bent Grass, Kentucky Blue Grass, Chewings Fescue and Perennial Ryegrass should be fed from late winter to early summer and again late summer to autumn. In tropical to subtropical areas with relatively mild winters, fertilising in cooler months is not necessary.

### How to feed

Lawn foods can be purchased as either a liquid or a solid, in granular or powder form. Liquid solutions are available in diffusers which are fitted to the end of a garden hose and applied as a spray, providing even, uniform distribution without burning the grasses. Solid or granular fertilisers are spread by hand or by hiring a spreader. Apply in a north/south direction, then east/west to give an even distribution. Then water in well to totally dissolve the fertiliser, otherwise you could end up with burnt brown patches or, worse, kill the lawn completely.

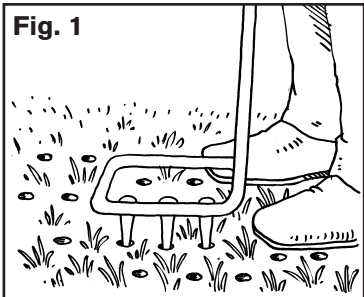
For the busy gardener, slow release fertilisers suitable for cool season and warm season grasses are also available. They have a fast release component to give the lawn a quick boost but then continue to feed for up to 3 months.

## Step 2: Aeration

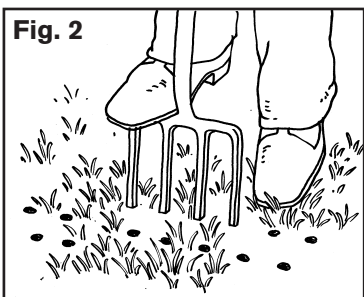
Aeration simply means punching holes into the soil surface to improve water, air and fertiliser penetration down to the grass roots to stimulate growth. Use a hollow tined lawn aerator (Fig.1) to remove small cores of soil or jab the tines of a garden fork into the soil as far as they will go (Fig.2). Moving the fork back and forth a couple of times. For truly large lawn areas, a power aerator can be hired to save you a great deal of time and effort.

Application of a light dressing of clean washed sand over the aerated lawn will fill the holes and help improve water penetration and root growth.

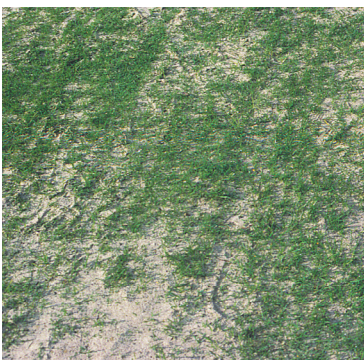




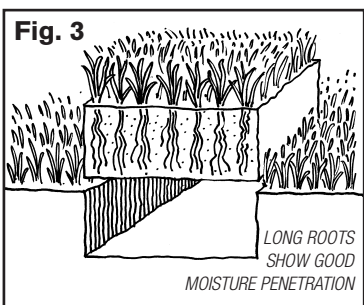
**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**



After aerating the soil, use a little sand as a top dressing. This helps with water penetration and root growth and evens out rough surfaces.



**Fig. 3**



A little bit of well kept lawn always looks great in any ornamental garden.

### Step 3: Watering

Frequency depends on the type of lawn grass, soil type and weather conditions. Cool season grasses referred to in Step 1, require more watering than tougher drought tolerant grasses such as couch and other summer grasses, especially during hot weather. Heavier soils also hold moisture well and a reasonably heavy soaking once a week in summer should be all that's needed. However, sandy or lighter soils may require watering every two days during summer months. Generally, a deep uniform soaking at intervals is better than frequent light sprinklings which can cause grasses to become soft and sappy and make them prone to disease. Light sprinklings also encourage surface roots that become badly stressed during hot weather. To check how moisture is penetrating to the grass roots, simply remove a square or round plug of lawn (Fig.3) which you can then neatly replace without damaging the lawns appearance. If you haven't done so already, consider installing a permanent pop-up sprinkler system. They save time, effort and money by conserving water.

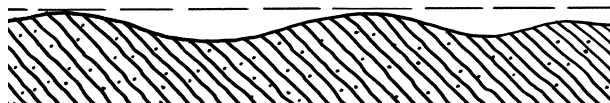
Drainage is also vital. Lawn grasses will not thrive in wet soggy conditions and good drainage ensures better moisture penetration and air to the grass roots. So next time you're watering, or after it rains, check to see if there is any excessive water lying about. If drainage is poor, install some Agi Pipe or Slotted Drain. Refer to Step 3 in MitrePlan #17, "Growing Lawn", for details. Or, it may be that water is retained only in surface hollows. In this case, top dress and level these areas with a loam soil to give an even surface (Fig. 4).

### Step 4: Mowing

Established lawns should be mown frequently and consistently. Remove only 1/3 of the height of the grass at any cut. Generally, aim for a height of about 2cm during spring and autumn and 3cm during summer. Cutting too short causes shallow root formation which then encourages weeds.

**Fig. 4**

HOLLOW'S NEED TO BE TOP DRESSED AND LEVELLED.



Leave the grass a little longer in summer (left hand side) and shorter in winter (right hand side).



Paspalum can make a nice even lawn look very patchy.



Using a weedicide like Roundup will kill the paspalum and the surrounding grass. All you need to do now is top dress and sow a little more seed on the patches and the lawn will be back to perfect.



Flat weeds in a lawn like plantain can be easily controlled with Lawn Weeder Feeder.

After mowing in summer, leaving grass clippings on the lawn provides it with a valuable organic mulch that helps retain moisture and save water. But in winter or weather, it's best to remove clippings - they tend to collect in damp masses that may damage the lawn as they decay. But don't waste them - add them to your compost heap.

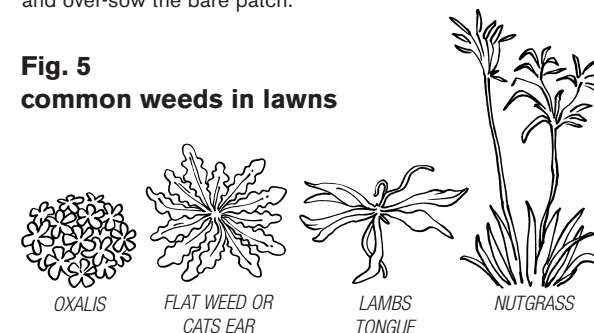
### Step 5: Weed Control

Weeds shouldn't be a problem in a vigorous growing, well drained and maintained lawn. They can only gain a foothold where the grass is too thin or weak to suppress them (Fig.5). So if they do become a problem, look first at your maintenance practices - are you following all the required steps for strong, healthy growth?

Broad leaf weeds in lawns are easily controlled with a selective weed killer like Broad Leaf Lawn Weeder or better still Lawn Weed and Feed which controls the weeds as well as fertilises your lawns. When other grasses like Paspalum and Winter Grass invades your lawns then you will need to use a spot spray of weed killers like Roundup or Zero. These will kill parts of the lawn as well so you will need to top dress and over-sow the bare patch.

**Fig. 5**

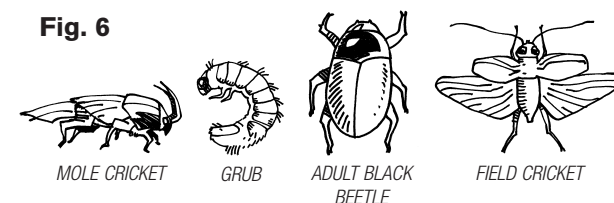
common weeds in lawns



### Step 6: Pest Control

There aren't many lawn pests (Fig.6) but they can cause considerable damage in some regions of Australia. The adult Black Beetle burrows in the soil, while its white Curl Grub feeds on the roots and causes the grass to grow yellow and die, mainly in spring and autumn. During summer, Field and Mole Crickets can spoil the lawn surface with their tunnelling and burrowing, and may even eat the grass. Both beetles and crickets can be treated with Chlorban or Lawn Beetle Killer. But be sure to follow the rate instructions and safety precautions printed on the label.

**Fig. 6**



## MIGHTY HELPFUL HINTS TO MAKE THE JOB EASIER

- To keep a lawn strong and healthy, a complete fertiliser should be applied every 6-8 weeks during the growing season.
- A deep, thorough soaking every week is better than frequent light sprinklings.
- When mowing, aim at 2-3cm in height - longer lawns give healthier growth, better appearance and feel more luxurious.
- Only top dress using a sandy loam soil if levels need correcting to prevent water lying around.
- Always read the label carefully before applying any weed killer to your grass or you may kill the lawn as well as the weed.

### IMPORTANT:

**Not all Mitre 10 stores have a garden centre.**

Mitre 10 gratefully acknowledges the assistance of

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in the preparation of this MitrePlan.

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**IMPORTANT:** This project planner has been produced to provide basic information and our experienced staff are available to answer any questions you may have. However, this information is provided for use on the understanding that Mitre 10 is not liable for any loss or damage which is suffered or incurred (including but not limited to indirect or consequential loss), for any personal injury or damage to property suffered or sustained as a result of using the information contained in this MitrePlan Project Planner. Mitre 10 advises you to call in a qualified tradesperson, such as an electrician or plumber, where expert services are required, and to independently assess any safety precautions that will need to be followed prior to using the information in this MitrePlan Project Planner.

**WARNING:** There may be by laws or regulations of councils or other statutory bodies that you must comply with when following this MitrePlan Project Planner.

**Your local MITRE 10 Store is:**