

## *Success Tip...*

### **Controlling Moss in the Lawn**

If moss begins to appear in your lawn, it's usually an indication that for whatever reason, the conditions are not good for growing grass. The grass dies out and the moss moves in. Moss does not kill grass – it grows where the grass won't. Once moss becomes established, grass will not spread into those areas. Conditions that favor moss and not favor grass include one or a combination of the following:

-Excessive shade -Low pH of the soil -Poor drainage -Compacted soils -Excessive irrigation - Low soil fertility -Poor air circulation -Shallow rocky soils

**Killing the existing moss** - Moss can be killed or mechanically removed, but unless the favorable conditions change to favor growing grass, the moss will eventually begin to re-grow. Moss can be killed with the use of many manufactured moss and algae killers, copper sulfate or iron sulfate, or by using a home remedy of dissolving 1 small box of baking soda in 2 gallons of luke-warm water. Place in tank sprayer and spray the moss. Burns it off within a day and keeps it away for 4-6 weeks. Raking the moss with a hard rake will also help in drying the moss and airing the soil. Again, these are all temporary fixes.

#### **Changing the conditions-**

**Shade:** Moss tolerates shade better than grass. So thinning and limbing-up trees will help increase sunlight and air circulation. Removal of selected trees will also help allow in more sunlight and better air flow. Also consider planting a more shade tolerant grass such as the turf type tall fescues. In extremely shady areas where grass will not grow, consider planting shade tolerant groundcovers or mulching the area. And if all else fails, let the moss grow. It is green, and does well in the shade! Work around it.

**Check the soil pH:** Although pH of the soil is minor factor in favoring mosses, if the soil is too acidic for turf growth, adjust with lime to a favorable pH for turf (5.8 to 6.8 or so).

**Poor drainage:** Re-grading, adding French drains, elevating areas, etc, are all ways to increase better water flow through the area.

**Compacted soils:** Core aeration is the best way to open up compacted soils. The next step would be to back fill those holes with coarse sand for added aeration.

**Excessive Irrigation:** Watering on a regular schedule is not good. Water only as needed and water thoroughly and deeply each time you do.

**Low soil fertility:** Again, have the soil tested. More than likely, beginning a regular lawn care feeding program (getting nitrogen back into the soil) does the trick. But do have your soils tested to see what they may lack.

Once you have altered these conditions, feel free to begin renovating the area and growing grass once again – moss free!

