



Thatch build up is a compressed, light brown organic matter located between the soil line and the grass blades. Moderate thatch build up is actually beneficial to the soil, but problems can develop with excessive buildup generally ½” or more. The biggest problem would be the lack of water penetration to the grass roots. Water is repelled by the thatch barrier and as a result, nutrients from fertilizers cannot efficiently reach the root system.

Equipment Options

A variety of methods can be used to de-thatch a lawn, but the fastest and easiest would be to use a mechanical gas powered de-thatcher or power rake. Most are push type with an 18” or 22” wide cut. A series of vertical flail blades or tines spaced about ½’ apart strike the top of the soil and pull the thatch to the surface.



Flail Blade

Preparation

Mow the existing grass to 1”. The short mowing helps the blades easily reach the top of the soil and remove more thatch. Set the blade depth to penetrate 1/8” into the soil. Attempting more depth may scalp the lawn and damage existing turf.

If more de-thatching or soil exposure is desired, as is the case for overseeding, we suggest making multiple passes to avoid existing turf damage, instead of trying to cut deeper into the soil.

Grass seed will germinate when buried as little as two times the seeds thickness, by making multiple passes and improving the seed soil contact you will get a fuller stand of grass.

Once the thatch has been brought to the surface it needs to be bagged and taken away. Many of our clients find it works much quicker to bag the thatch using a lawn mower with a bagger attachment.

Seed, Fertilize or Both

It is an optimum time after power raking your lawn to apply grass seed, fertilizers or both. The flail blade design of a power rake in addition to removing the thatch barrier will leave a series of grooves in the soil about ½” apart. The newly exposed surface makes an ideal seed bed. We recommend the use of starter fertilizers if you plan to overseed at this time.