

by Ashton Richie

## How to Deal with Common Lawn Problems

**W**hen it comes to the low-down on lawn care needs for 2004, we have some good news and bad news. Due to above average rainfall in 2003 across much of the U.S., lawns should be in pretty good shape this spring, because grass is healthy when it gets enough food and water. However, wet soil also means a bumper crop of weeds, crabgrass and the potential for damaging insects like grubs.

Overall, having a great looking lawn is not that difficult. Just following a few simple steps during the right time of the year can result in a healthy, plush lawn. And, since lawn care is one of the most simple and inexpensive ways to protect the investment you have in your home, it makes a lot of sense to take care of problems early on and save money down the road. Here are a few quick and easy solutions to guarantee lawn owners are seeing green this spring.

### Crabby about crabgrass

Because of the heavy rains in 2003 in most regions of the U.S., crabgrass flourished and produced a lot of seeds. If lawns had even a few crabgrass plants last year, chances are, there are thousands of tiny crabgrass seeds lying dormant in lawns during the winter months. Come spring, these seeds will grow into new plants, wreaking horticultural havoc. In early spring, apply a turf builder fertilizer that attacks crabgrass. Also, it is important for lawns to be mowed at one of the higher settings. A tall, thick lawn to shade the soil will discourage new weed seeds from growing.

### Weed all about it

Aside from being downright ugly, weeds can cause extensive lawn damage by competing with grass and other plants for water, sunlight and nutrients. And, they don't give up without a fight, so the neighborhood kids can pick dandelions until their fingers are yellow but they will grow right back.

Many weeds have very deep roots that are almost impossible to dig up manually, so it is best to get to them with a product that will kill weeds, roots and all, without harming the "good" grass. In late spring, apply a weed control fertilizer to kill weeds and fill in bare patches for a rich green lawn.

Then follow a regular feeding schedule throughout the year to help create a thick lawn that will not allow any room for new weeds to get started.

### Keep (unwanted pests) off the grass

Last summer conditions were ideal for adult beetles to lay grub eggs in the soil. Grubs eat the roots of grass, causing irregu-

larly shaped patches of wilted, dead or dying grass in spring. And, since grubs are the larvae of Japanese and other beetles, when the adult beetles emerge from the ground in early summer, they can cause damage to other plants in the yard. To break the cycle and prevent grubs from



appearing this fall, apply a season-long grub control in early summer. If grub damage is apparent this spring with dead patches of lawn, seeding may be necessary.

The Scotts Company has developed an easy-to-follow Annual Lawn Care Program™ to help homeowners develop a thick, green lawn that is free of weed and insect problems. By simply entering personalized lawn-related information along with a zip code in the program builder database found on [www.scotts.com](http://www.scotts.com), Scotts can instantly create a custom program to keep lawns healthy and in top physical condition year round—and ensure that seasonal lawn problems will not sneak up on you. And, best of all, there is no need to worry about remembering the program steps, since Scotts will also send personalized e-mail reminders.

Consumer questions and more specific problems can be answered by calling the Scotts Consumer Helpline at 1-800-543-TURF (8873) or logging onto [www.scotts.com](http://www.scotts.com) or [www.askashton.com](http://www.askashton.com)

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