

BayScaping year-round

Even if you do just one of these things each season, you can make a big difference for your lawn and for Casco Bay.

SPRING



- **Weed**
It's easier to pull emergent weeds by hand while roots are short and the soil is moist.
- **Overseed**
Seed thin or bare spots with endophyte-enhanced perennial ryegrass. It has the best chance of germinating before weeds take over.
- **Sharpen blades of the lawn mower**
Take your mower into a hardware store or garden center to sharpen blades. A sharper cut prevents tearing, which can open the grass to fungal infection.
- **Look for shady areas with thinning grass**
Grass has a hard time growing in areas that don't get 6 hours of direct sunlight. Don't fertilize; that just generates more weeds. Instead, plant shade-tolerant groundcovers such as bunchberry, partridgeberry, or Canada mayflower.

SUMMER



- **Cut little and often**
Mow at least weekly in the growing season and remove just the top third of the blade every time. Adjust lawn mower to the highest setting, preferably 3½ - 4 inches.
- **Mulch grass clippings**
For mature lawns (10+ years), grass clippings provide all the fertilizer they need. Leaving clippings returns about 50% of the nitrogen back into the soil.
- **Water deeply but infrequently**
Water deeply, 1-1.5 inches of water per week. You can measure the amount of water from rainfall and your sprinkler with a rain gauge or a tuna can. Let the lawn go dormant in late summer; it will green up again in the fall.
- **Seed thin or bare spots**
Use perennial ryegrass to fill in any bare spots or areas where you pulled weeds.

FALL



- **Aerate**
Aerate the lawn in early fall to reduce thatch, improve drainage, and loosen the soil.
- **Overseed**
Spread seed over freshly-aerated soil to fill in thin lawns or dead areas. Use seed mixes that include at least 70% fine fescue or tall fescue varieties for established lawns, ideally between mid-August and mid-September. Protect the seeds before they sprout with a 1/8 - 1/4 inch layer of well-seasoned compost.
- **Cut once more for winter**
Once grass stops growing, usually by early November, cut grass a little shorter (2-3 inches) to reduce the chance of snow mold disease come winter.
- **Fertilize frugally**
A soil test will tell you if you need to add fertilizer or adjust the pH (ideal pH is 6.0). Apply phosphorus-free, slow-release nitrogen fertilizer, preferably between Labor Day and Columbus Day. Test kits are available at keeper@cascobay.org.

WINTER



- **Don't pile snow on the lawn**
This promotes snow mold disease in the grass.
- **Plan your ideal yard**
How much lawn do you need? Think about alternatives to grass in areas that receive little sunlight, experience a lot of foot traffic, or are poorly drained. In wet areas, consider planting ornamentals that tolerate wet soil better than grass does.
- **Search for places where rainwater and snowmelt run off**
Identify areas where rain barrels, rain gardens, or bushes can help prevent runoff.

Learn more at
cascobay.org/bayscaping

