

Spring Home Improvement

lawn • garden • home

*Ideas, Tips
& Tricks*

2021



How to prevent crabgrass

Few things can give a home exterior that sought after wow factor as well as a nicely maintained lawn. A lush green landscape is a great way to show pride in home ownership and improve curb appeal.

As many homeowners know, lawns are under constant attack. The elements are rarely easy on lawns, and watchful eyes must always be kept open for other problems that can plague a lawn, including crabgrass.

Crabgrass can be a formidable adversary in the summer months. According to the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, crabgrass begins as seeds. These seeds germinate in spring or early summer. While crabgrass dies after the first hard frost in fall, crabgrass seeds remain dormant in winter, and the seeds then grow again in the following spring when ground temperature warms up. Without action to prevent crabgrass seeds from germinating, homeowners will likely end up with patch-



es of crabgrass throughout their lawns every summer.

The home improvement retailer Lowes® notes that a healthy lawn is the best defense against crabgrass. The healthier a lawn is, the harder it is for unwanted grasses like crabgrass to thrive. The following are a handful of strategies that can promote a healthy lawn and make it more difficult for unsightly crabgrass to establish itself in the months ahead.

- Keep grass at a consistent length, and don't cut too low. Maintaining a consistent length of grass by mowing at

regular intervals can make it hard for crabgrass to thrive. Crabgrass requires ample sunlight to germinate, so grass that is not cut too short may keep crabgrass from growing in. Of course, grass should not be allowed to grow knee-length, either. By raising blades to the mowing height appropriate for their type of grass, and mowing at regular intervals so the grass remains at that height through the summer, homeowners can promote healthy lawns and make it harder for crabgrass to germinate.

CRABGRASS.....Con't Pg. 8

5 outdoor projects that add value



Exterior renovations can enhance the appearance of a property and make it more enjoyable for homeowners. Certain renovations have the potential to add value to a home, while others may do the opposite. Learning which one have the largest return on investment can help homeowners select features that will have the most positive impact.

Curb appeal goes a long

way toward attracting potential buyers. According to the National Association of Realtors, first impressions of a property have a strong influence on buyers. Landscaping and external features can do much to influence such impressions.

- Lawn care program: Investing in a lawn care program that consists of fertilizer and weed control application and can be transferred over to a

subsequent home owner is an attractive feature. NAR says such a care program can recover \$1,000 in value of the \$330 average cost, or a 303 percent ROI.

- Low-maintenance lifestyle: When choosing materials for projects, those that offer low-maintenance benefits can be preferential. These include low-maintenance patio ma-

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Low-maintenance lawn alternatives

A traditional lawn may not be right for every property nor desired by every homeowner. There is no denying that lawns take time and effort to establish and daily or weekly maintenance to thrive. Homeowners who find that a traditional lawn is not practical can explore some low-maintenance alternatives.

Wildflower meadow

Homeowners with wide swaths of property may discover meadows are cost- and time-efficient. Stores sell special wildflower meadow mixes of seeds or homeowners can use wildflower plug plants throughout areas where grasses are left to grow longer. This natural



area can be a home to wildlife and an idyllic backdrop to a home. Most meadows only require a spring or summer and autumn cut to thrive and look good.

Ornamental grasses

Partition areas of the prop-

erty for ornamental grasses to grow. The gardening resource Elemental Green says ornamental grasses tend to be drought-resistant and low-maintenance. They won't

ALTERNATIVES.....
Con't Pg. 8

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7 things to consider when buying a shed

Backyard sheds can be useful assets. Sheds can create storage space in the garage, basement or other areas of the house that have become gathering spots for gear typically used outdoors. Sheds are ideal for housing mowers, tools and even pool-care equipment. But they can be put to other uses as well, such as being key spots to engage in hobbies or even as a child's clubhouse.

Various factors should

be considered before building or buying a shed. A storage shed can be a significant investment. Once placed, sheds may remain in their dedicated spots for years to come. That means careful thought should go into the planning process.

1. Check your local building codes first. Before you accumulate building materials or order a shed, be sure to know the ins and outs of shed codes. The codes may

impact the shed's placement, construction, the materials used, size, and numerous other factors. It's much easier to amend plans beforehand than to face the hassle and expense after learning you did things incorrectly.

2. Choose placement wisely. Spend several days assessing the yard and thinking about the uses for the shed. If you plan to store pool floats and chemicals inside of the shed, it should be located close

enough to the pool to be convenient. Look at the lay of the land. If there is a soggy patch of land that can turn swampy under the shed's foundation, that is a poor location choice. If you need access to electricity, placing it far away from the house could necessitate running expensive wiring.

3. Consider the design. Just because a shed is for storage doesn't mean aesthetics should be overlooked. Choose a shed style that complements your home. You may also want to match certain architectural features, like arched doorways or dormers. Design also may relate to practicality. For instance, storing a riding mower inside may necessitate dual doors that open widely.

4. Invest in quality materials. Spending a little more and using quality materials can ensure it lasts long



enough to be cost-effective. The right materials will be resistant to splitting, cracking, decay, and insect damage.

5. Prepare the site well. A proper foundation for the shed is almost as important as the shed itself. You cannot just drop the shed on the

lawn and leave it, as the shed can sink or structural issues may arise if it is placed on a weak base.

6. Blend into the environment. Surround the shed with shrubs or plants so that it blends into the yard and complements the space.

7. Deck out the interior. Use every storage tool at your disposal to maximize floor, wall and even rafter space for storage. Plan where items will be kept and customize the storage options around those locations.

Sheds can be an asset and improve storage capability in the backyard.

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ALTERNATIVES

Continued from Pg. 6

CRABGRASS

Continued from Pg. 5

need much fertilizer and are often resistant to pests as well. Ornamental grasses grow in tufts or sprays and will not require mowing. However, they are not ideal for areas that get foot traffic.

Moss

Moss can thrive in shady areas and ones where the soil tends to stay a bit damp. Moss is velvety soft and green, so it can mimic the

look of a traditional lawn but won't require mowing and other upkeep. Because it spreads quickly, moss can take over quite rapidly. You will need to protect areas where you do not want moss by creating barriers to stop spread.

Gravel

Stone and gravel areas can reduce maintenance in the landscape and require very

little upkeep. When gravel is installed correctly, weeds may not grow readily. Gravel installation may include laying heavy-duty, semi-permeable landscape fabric, which is available in home improvement centers. Gravel is cheaper than pavers and can be just as beautiful.

Artificial turf

If the desired look is a lawn without all the upkeep,

there are various artificial grass options on the market. Homeowners who opt for artificial turf can save money and space devoted to lawn mowers and other lawn tools. Grass may be ideal for some, but there are alternatives for people who have troublesome landscapes or desire a low-maintenance product for their homes.

Look & shop locally for your home improvement projects this spring!



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VALUE

Continued from Pg. 5

materials, composite decking, vinyl fencing, and inorganic mulched beds.

- Fire pit: A fire pit can be used for much of the year. In the spring and summer, the firepit is a great place to congregate to roast marshmallows or sip wine and gaze into the fire. In the fall, the fire pit can make for a cozy retreat. A fire pit that has a gas burner is low-maintenance, and the National Association of Landscape Professionals says that most can recoup about \$4,000 of their \$6,000 average price tag.
- Softscaping: Hardscaping refers to structures like outdoor kitchens or decks. Softscaping involves the living elements of the landscape. Hiring a landscape

designer to install trees, shrubs, natural edging, and rock elements can do wonders toward improving the look and value of a home.

- Pool or water feature: In certain markets, particularly hot climates, a pool or another water feature is a must-have. However, in other areas where outdoor time is limited, a pool or water feature can actually lower the value of a home. Speaking with a real estate professional can give homeowners an idea of how a pool will fare in a given neighborhood.

Outdoor improvements can improve the marketability of a home, as well as enhance its appearance and function.

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