

Renovation Guide

Renovate like a professional this growing season



Lawn renovation is on the rise.

It is at this time of the year there is only one word that enthusiastically comes from the mouth of a LawnPrider, and that one word is RENOVATE! Now as you know we aren't talking about renovating the kitchen, bathroom and so on for us our field of dreams regardless of size is to take the center stage.

The popularity of lawn renovations has risen over the past few years and on the back of a worldwide pandemic which saw many in a series of lockdowns allowed homeowners to find new hobbies. The home lawn became a place of peace a place where we could bust the boredom, enjoy, relax, and destress even through the cooler months and what is going on in the world.

With the growing season upon us many will look to take their lawn to a new level regardless of whether you are just starting out or a seasoned campaigner there are always ways to improve and the best place to start is by way of renovating your lawn.

Now don't get carried away, a lawn renovation is a process, a process best thought out prior to making the plunge as there are many aspects to consider, a well thought out renovation combined with professional products will indeed deliver you the results you want to achieve and have your neighbours asking "Why and how"

Enter the LawnPride guide to renovating your lawn, please be mindful this guide is directed at those that have Warm Season Grass varieties including Couch, Blue Couch, Kikuyu, Zoysia and Buffalo. For more information on Warm Season Varieties check out our Blog.

When am I going to conduct my renovation?

There are some important steps to consider along the way, and this decision is critical and can determine your overall outcome in terms of the renovation, and the reason for this is the following practices are to be conducted when your lawn is actively growing. Soil temperatures are important and needed to support growth and recovery and your location will determine at what point you pull the trigger.

For those in the northern parts of Australia where Winter is mild to non-existent the availability to renovate in September/October is very real yet for the southerners the ideal time might push into November as the warm season varieties have taken a little longer to wake from Winter dormancy. As the soil temperatures increase so does the growth rate of your lawn and when you arrive at a point where you are mowing on a more frequent basis, the lawn is therefore telling you I am awake and actively growing it is at this point any lawn renovation procedures can take place.



Inspection and review.

This is where we take a moment to walk our lawn and take note of where it's positioned. During the cooler months you may have noticed some issues arise that require some attention and is best practice to tackle these prior to renovating.

Weed management and drainage issues are usually the first problems to arise followed by wear, disease, and pest. If you are lucky enough to have irrigation now is the time to ensure the system is functioning correctly as you will be relying heavily on this post renovation and moving into Summer. These finer details if not corrected can impact and contribute to the desired outcome of your renovation.

WHEN IT COMES TO TURF, TIMING IS EVERYTHING.



Soil Health.

Soil health plays a pivotal role in the overall health of your lawn and is often forgotten by most. Soil testing is an important part of the turf industry in general to take the guesswork out of what the plant requires to grow at its optimum. Turf varieties like us require a balanced diet to be able to perform at their best and this comes down to the correct nutrition and the elements of your profile. The benefits of a soil test cannot be mistaken, as the results derived from a professional analysis will be able to highlight the possible issues you may be facing within your profile that you are unable to see and diagnose.

Taking a soil sample is relatively easy and can be conducted by following some simple procedures. When looking to remove your soil sample it is worthwhile to decide, do I want a general overall test of the lawn by taking multiple samples around the property or am I best to break my lawn into sectors i.e., front yard, back yard, and footpath as individual tests, as these areas can return significantly different results once tested. Individual tests will provide a more accurate diagnosis and allow you to rectify any issues with greater ease.

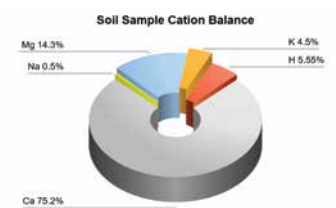
Once the soil sample has been sent and analyzed the results will be tabled detailing the key indicators required for turf health and their current levels this includes interpreting PH levels, essential nutrient levels and requirements, and other soil deficiencies, all of which are able to be corrected if needed via the use of amendments and applications of suitable fertilisers.

LawnPride will analyse this report and recommend the products you require to rectify any issues.

Have your results before you renovate.

SOIL TESTING - 2-3 WEEKS PRIOR TO RENOVATION

Soil pH (1:5 water)	6.63	6.0 – 7.0
Soil pH (1:5 CaCl ₂)	5.96	5.0 – 6.5
EC (dSm)	0.094	<0.5
Calcium (PPM)	2554.22	2377.2
Magnesium (PPM)	290.73	305.6
Potassium (PPM)	294.72	331.1
Sodium (PPM)	19.87	<70.0
Calcium (%)	75.2	65 – 75
Magnesium (%)	14.3	15 – 25
Potassium (%)	4.5	5 – 10



Are we there yet?

Close but not quite. You are currently a couple of weeks out from the planned date of renovation and the lawn is on its way transitioning from the cooler period into the gradual warmer temperatures that Spring provides and will be looking for nutrition to help with this process.

An application of a granular fertiliser combined with Rootmaxx now will only help strengthen the plant, promote root development, increase microbial activity, and add some much-needed organic matter, therefore you have a healthier lawn leading in and out of the renovation.

Another lawn issue that generally appears during Winter months is Hydrophobic soils, this is where your soil is unable to reap the benefits of rain and or irrigation and water/moisture retention is lost. What is noticeable is that the water will tend to bead and run off rather than penetrate the soil layer. If your soil is a victim of this, the turf in those areas can lack the ability to uptake plant nutrients and begin the onset of dry patch. This will be noticeable against areas where moisture retention is significantly higher.

To rectify this issue starting your applications of Hydramaxx now will ensure you correct any waxy soils, improve infiltration, and increase water retention setting your profile up for the rigorous Summer ahead.

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WELCOME TO GAME DAY!

A good night's sleep, early rise and a plan in place will see you breeze through the renovation. For first time renovators, the process can be a daunting experience and even have your neighbours asking the question "Have you just killed your lawn?" The answer is no, what you are about to do is give your lawn a new lease on life and your lawn in turn will thank you for it moving forward.

Low, low, low.

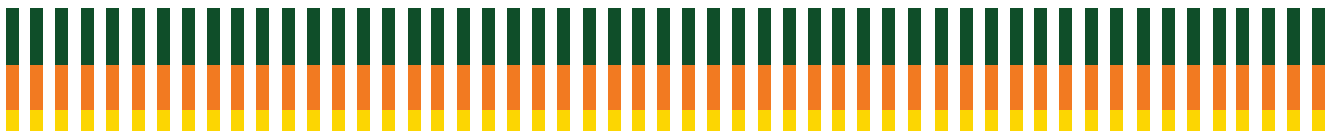
You may have heard of the term Scalping, what is it? and how do we go about it?

Scalping is the process of mowing your lawn with your rotary mower and or cylinder mower at a very low level. Where we, with some varieties go against the age-old rule of never remove more than 1/3 of the plants leaf at a time.

Kikuyu and couch varieties do benefit from this action as they have the remarkable ability to bounce back strong from this process due to the plants growing characteristics. It is highly unlikely you will kill these varieties during this process.

Buffalo and Zoysia varieties need a different approach. In general Zoysia varieties have a slower recovery time as they are not as aggressive as Couch and Kikuyu. **Buffalo owners be careful!** If this process isn't conducted with care you will severely damage and set back your lawn. The reason for this is the loss of all leaf and Buffalo contains a mass of stolons that grow above the ground weaving through one and other creating a mat effect, by mowing Buffalo at very low levels you can severely damage these stolons compromising its overall health, these stolons are the life blood of your lawn without them you don't have a lawn. Therefore it is recommended that for Zoysia and Buffalo lawns when scalping you maintain some leaf on the plant, this will limit the risk of damage to the stolons and aid recovery.

This procedure Scalping allows us greater access to the canopy to enable us to remove excess thatch build up which is the next step.



Thatch.

Every grass variety produces what's known as thatch, with some varieties producing more naturally than others.

Thatch comprises of all the living and dead parts of the plant that sits below the lush green leaf and the soil profile. Thatch production is a natural cycle when the plant is actively growing and when managed is beneficial to your lawn.

When regular and frequent mowing is performed clippings become a lot smaller and therefore not seen as to contributing to the thatch layer as studies show those small amounts of leaf contain up to 80% water combined with nutrients making them easier to be broken down by the beneficial living organisms that call our lawn home.

The production of thatch occurs when the plant (turfgrass) is growing at a quicker rate than the living organisms can break down material produced. Thatch can be managed when you have the right practices in place. Thatch production is greatly accelerated when the use of quick release fertilisers are used as the Nitrogen content is made available upfront to the plant therefore you get an instant flush of growth, this particular practice is one to be mindful of and why these days the use of slow and controlled release fertilisers are important in your maintenance program as these are specifically designed to meet the plants nutritional requirements and avoid these quick flushes of growth.

Thatch be gone...

This process may not apply to everyone as now days as thatch management throughout the year has formed part of a maintenance process for some. For those that perform a yearly renovation a thatch layer to some extent will be present. By removing the excess thatch layer, we will increase our rate of infiltration, nutrients, and oxygen to the profile where they are needed to support plant health and decrease our chances of pest and disease pressures.

This is best done mechanically; dedicated dethatching and scarifying machines are now more readily available for hire by the homeowner allowing you the ability to DIY. If you aren't confident and or worried about this process, there is a growing number of professional contractors that offer this specialised service. Again, care when using these machines on Buffalo must be taken, scarifier machines for instance contain a series of vertical blades that comb through your lawn breaking up and releasing the thatch, if not used correctly you will slice and dice the life blood of your lawn as mentioned earlier.

If you are up to putting in the hard yards, thatch can also be removed by using a suitable garden rake. Once the debris has been loosened you are able to use your rotary mower to collect and dispose the bulk of the dead and decaying matter leaving a small amount behind which is still beneficial.



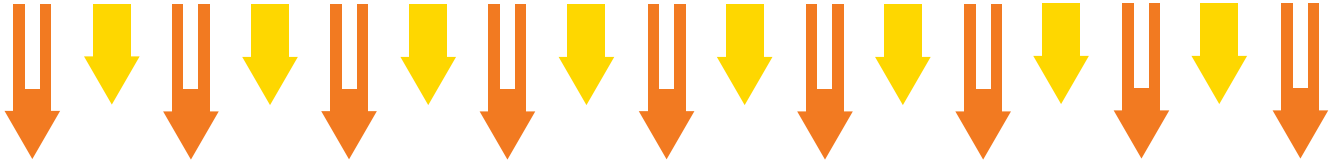
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Aerating.

Aeration is a lawn maintenance procedure. And quite simply is the art of putting hundreds upon thousands of holes in your lawn, either by machine and or manual labour with spiked rollers or pitchfork. This practice has been around years and years and not only in the professional turf grass industry, as a means of improving your turf and soil health.

The main reason for aeration is to combat compaction, as compacted soils will prevent the circulation and movement of air, water and nutrients which is vital when ensuring plant health.



Why does your lawn need aerating?

When looking at your lawn it is hard to tell whether compaction is a problem or not, yes there are signs to look for such as moss, excessive water pooling and so on, but without the ability to look at the cross section of your profile it is difficult to diagnose. Compaction can happen relatively easy, and you would not know. It can be as easy as excessive foot traffic, pets, cars, and kids can all contribute to compaction.

COMBAT COMPACTION WITH REGULAR AERATION

What are the benefits.

- Reduce soil compaction
- Better oxygen transfer between your sub soil and atmosphere
- Better uptake of nutrients and amendments
- Improve the hydrophobic nature of your plot
- Minimise water run-off and erosion
- Increase water uptake and penetration
- To provide galleries to help root promotion and strengthen the plants roots
- Improvement of plant health
- The ability to work on and control your PH levels
- Can also assist in reducing thatch
- The ability to add different mediums as top dress to your profile
- Will help with the onset of dry patch
- Allow you to feed, amend and protect your lawn with ease during renovation
- Improve your lawns resistance to disease

Tools available.

Mechanical aerator. This is the most popular and effective way to maximise this process. This machine can remove a core, sample, small plug of your profile if desired ejecting it onto your lawn as it goes through its motion. These core samples can be collected and removed if desired, or you are able to leave them, these cores in a small amount of time will dry and breakdown easily.

Solid tine aerator, although making holes in your profile is a good thing the difference with a solid tine aerator is the soil that it is pressed into to make the penetration must go somewhere. Therefore, it can contribute to the compaction of the soil surrounding the penetration pressing the soils together.

A simple aeration hack that can be done by the homeowner is a drill and auger bit, it is hard work, but you can achieve the same benefits as plugging.



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LAWNPRIDE GOODNESS!

Professional Products - Professional Results.

Outside seeing your results post renovation, this step is just as exciting and the most important, the products applied in this step help determine your recovery and results. With access to the profile and root zone of the turf variety via the core holes we can get the product where it is needed most.

Soil amendments and **products based on the recommendations of your soil test** are best applied now as the plant and profile have instant access to what you have applied. Organics, nutrition, soil wetters and more all form part of your recipe for success. If you haven't travelled down the road of a soil test LawnPride offers you a wide range of professional products to assist you at this stage.

Hydramaxx; A professional grade soil wetting agent providing excellent penetration, outstanding retention and improve uniformity.

Rootmaxx; A professional Bio Stimulant product with natural plant hormones that will aid and promote root development, encourage microbial activity, and add organic matter.

Kelp-ER; Increases resistance to pests, frost, and disease, promote natural healthy growth, stimulate root development and release locked up nutrients. Kelp-ER contains a host of minerals, vitamins, trace elements and natural growth hormones.

Granular fertilisers: Very well-balanced professional fertiliser range, with suitable nutrition to suit all varieties that will provide effective recovery from renovation with extended feeding times without excessive flushes of growth.

Maintain: A balanced all round lawn fertiliser with high 70% slow release nitrogen, providing effective green up of turfgrass and extended feeding without excessive flushes of growth.

Turfmaxx: Turfmaxx is an economical well-balanced turfgrass fertiliser ideal for use on turfgrass areas where exceptional colour must be maintained. Contains 67% slow release nitrogen for extended feeding of the turfgrass. Great for the cooler months.

Groturf: Professional lawn fertiliser with 100% up front nitrogen for outstanding growth and colour. LawnPride alternative to CK88 type fertilisers.

Amendments.

Gypsum: Will help improving your current soil profile, gypsum works on breaking down clay deposits. Gypsum also improves soil aeration and soil calcium levels and assists in soil flocculation.

Lime: For use on soils deficient in calcium and where the PH levels need adjusting to correct acidic profiles.



MAINTAIN
26-1-9 + Fe 20kg



MAINTAIN MINI
26-1-9 + Fe 20kg



TURFMAXX
19-1-16 + Fe 20kg



GROTURF
15-4-11 + Traces 20kg

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The final piece of the puzzle.

This is where we basically frame our artwork and top dress the lawn. When you undertake a complete renovation topdressing the lawn is where a chosen medium (soil, sand) is used to tackle those annoying undulations you may have found whilst mowing and or to rectify any potential issues with your profile.

The medium you use can be your own personal choice, although there are advantages of choosing the right one. If you are new to the lawn game and this is your first renovation you may have found, you have been battling compaction poor drainage due to poor profile composition. If you were to introduce a sandy loam blend you will improve infiltration rates due to larger pore spaces, reduce compaction, increase moisture retention, and add a small number of organics therefore improving the overall structure of your profile.

For those that have spent the time and effort improving their soil health and have conducted several renovations improving their surface over the years a washed sand medium is usually the preference, although it has zero nutritional value a washed sand is generally free from weed seeds and makes the process of spreading and levelling easier. Soil based mediums can be used for top dress at your discretion the biggest danger in this instance is the heightened risk of weed seed importation thus an escalation in weed germination.

The best advice to take when topdressing regardless of what you choose is to use the "Less is More" phrase, by topdressing lightly the lawn will recover quickly due to leaf exposure allowing you to apply several applications throughout the growing season. This practice far out ways the benefits of turning your lawn into a beach for instance. One point to note is there is a potential for the top dress to become hydrophobic, this is common yet easily rectified with Hydramaxx soil wetter.

Post renovation thoughts and practices.

Congratulations you have made it and have almost finished the LawnPride guide to renovating your lawn.

Below are some further points for consideration.

Watering.

Continue to use soil wetting agents like Hydramaxx during recovery to ensure any form of irrigation or rainfall can penetrate through. Ensure your top dress remains moist, sand-based mediums can act like an oven when left to dry and bake in the sun. Deep watering cycles will push moisture deeper into the profile encouraging the plant to establish a stronger, deeper root system. Roots of any plant will grow where there is soil moisture and the deeper the root system the better the plant will handle the heat waves and dryer periods.

So, when is the ideal time to water? Watering in the morning far out ways any other part of the day, early morning watering eliminates aggressive evaporation as winds and temperatures are generally low. Watering in the middle of the day you will lose a large amount of the water volume to evaporation due to increased daytime temperatures. Watering at night allows excess water to be left on the leaf which can increase disease pressures even though evaporation rates can be up to 40% less. Pop up irrigation when designed correctly will ensure your lawn is watered evenly and correctly using the least amount possible as opposed to your standard hose and sprinkler.

- Please be mindful of your restrictions if any, it may pay to contact your local council for information regarding watering in your area

Additional products and programs.

Whilst your lawn recovers now is the time to start thinking about protecting your hard work. This is in the form of pre-emergent and pest protection some will incorporate these into part of their procedure, and some will wait till the lawn recovers, whichever way you decide ensure they are applied before Summer weed pressures rise and lawn pests like Armyworm become active.

LAWNPRIDE LAWN CARE PROGRAMS

Moving forward there is nothing better than having a lawn program, a lawn program eliminates a great deal of guessing of when and what. At LawnPride we have free programs for the common varieties found in Australia, these programs advise the use of a product and when to apply to maximise your lawn's health year-round. Our programs can be found Online.

Disclaimer. There are many views and ways to conduct a lawn renovation, and some may have different views and or opinions to the above LawnPride guide.

A photograph showing a person watering a lawn with a hose. The water is spraying from the nozzle, creating a mist. The lawn is green and well-maintained. The background shows a paved area and a brick pillar.

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