

# Lawn care important to home improvement

By Jeri Young  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

## Home improvement.

Daunting words for home owners that conjure images of nasty chores like regrouting tile, cleaning out the garage or cleaning out clogged drains...Yikes.

No matter how you slice it, it just isn't a lot of fun and usually, it costs a lot of money.

But it has to be done, often out of necessity to make your home more comfortable or more attractive.

One of the simplest and most cost effective ways to improve your home's appearance is to get on our hands and knees.

No, not to go under the house to check out the furnace.

But to do a little work in the yard.

Not only does an attractive well landscaped yard provide added value to the home, it can also provide the owner a valuable opportunity to get some exercise.

The trick to getting started, is simple. Find a type of grass that will really grow in your yard and maintaining it.

"Fescues really work well in this area," says Horticultural Extension Agent, Bill Skelton. "They tend to do well in our soil. It's the most common lawn in the area."

According to Skelton, the best time to plant fescues is during the late summer or early fall.

Fescues are also fairly simple to maintain during the spring and summer.

"You don't really want to fertilize anymore," he says. "It's really too late to put any herbicides out."

Skelton also advises raising mowing heights to at least 3 1/2 inches.

"Let the foliage get tall enough to shade the ground," he says. "You can go as high as 4 1/2 inches."

According to Skelton, adding a little lime to the soil will raise the pH and make the soil more productive. He also suggest added organic matter, compost or soil conditioner to loosen up the soil.

"Water it once a week and you should be ok," he

says.

Here are a few more healthy yard tips.

- Topography, the rise and fall of the land is important. Steep slopes present high maintenance conditions. Plant ground cover to reduce the need for mowing while reducing soil erosion.

- Determine if your soil is sand, silt or clay. A soil

test will determine the pH and nutrient content and allow you to pick plants that work well with your soil.

- Plants not adapted to the areas hardness will need special attention and maintenance. Remember, some spots in your yard may be warmer than others.



PHOTO/SUE JOHNSON


Top: Johnny Williams' McCrorey Heights home has a beautifully manicured lawn. A properly cared-for lawn is more than grass and shrubbery - it's an investment in the look of the home.



PHOTO/SUE JOHNSON

William Davis' home in Hidden Valley is his pride and joy. He cares for three yards in the area.



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