


STEP BY STEP

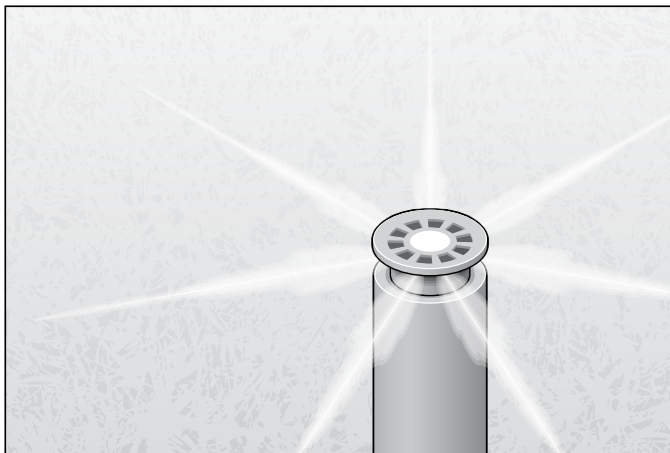
How to aerate properly

As time goes on, soil naturally compacts. Aeration, also called coring and aerifying, perforates the soil to allow air, water and nutrients to reach a lawn's roots. It also removes mild thatch. This helps roots grow deeper, making the lawn more vigorous and drought resistant. Aeration should occur when turf is in its peak growing season so it can recover quickly. This timing is typically in early spring or fall for cool-season grasses and late spring through early summer for warm-season grasses. Lawns with heavy clay soil or those subjected to particularly heavy foot traffic should be aerated once a year. Lawns with sandy soil or with healthy, thriving turf can be aerated every two to three years.

There are a few different tools contractors can choose from when it's time to perform aeration, including a spike aerator or a plug (or core) aerator. While it may seem sufficient to poke holes in the soil with a spike aerator, this process doesn't remove any soil mass and may actually lead to increased compaction near the holes. For the best results, experts say to use a plug aerator, which removes plugs of grass and soil 2 to 3 inches deep and 0.5 to 0.75 inches wide. After aeration is complete, water the lawn well and then continue basic lawn care practices, including fertilizing and mowing. It's also a good time to overseed and top dress the lawn.

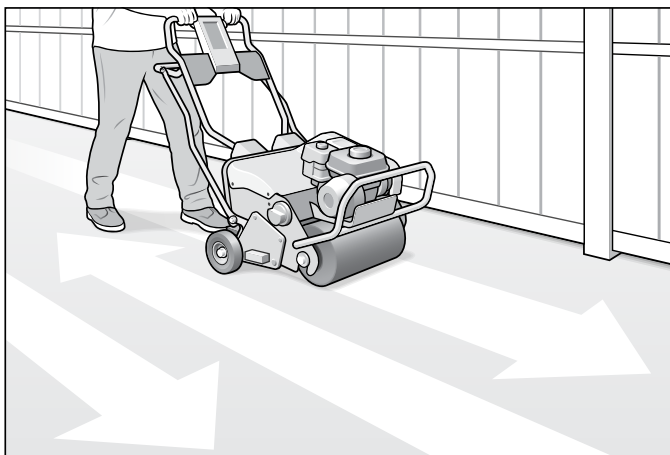
Follow these steps to perform proper aeration. 

SOURCE: The Grounds Guys



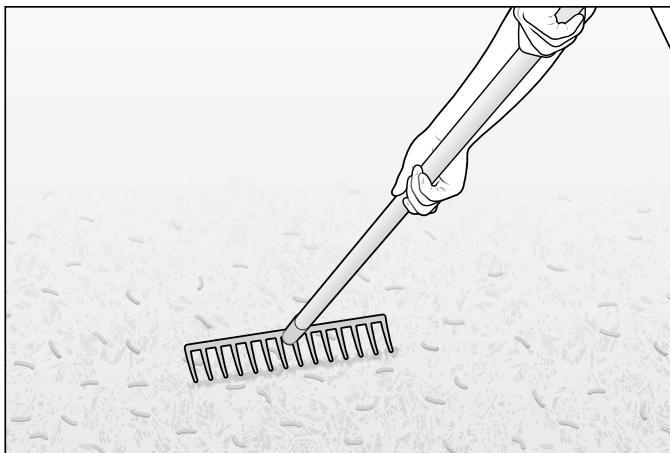
STEP 1

Apply or instruct your clients to apply 1 inch of water to the lawn the day before aeration. Mark any obstacles, such as sprinkler heads and utility lines, to avoid damaging them with the machine.



STEP 2

If soil is lightly compacted, make a single pass over the whole lawn, moving in parallel rows. Make multiple passes over more compacted areas, with the second pass perpendicular to the first.



STEP 3

Allow the excavated soil plugs to dry, and then instruct clients to break them up with a lawn mower or rake to add nutrients back into the soil.