



LILaC

LOW
INPUT
LAWN
CARE

LILaC is a strategy of lawn care that focuses on low maintenance grass varieties and reduced use of pesticides and fertilizers as

well as water, time and labor traditionally thought to be necessary for maintaining a healthy lawn.

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WHY CHOOSE LILAC?

Because it focuses on less inputs, LILaC helps homeowners to conserve water by watering less frequently. LILaC also reduces the application of fertilizers and weed control products by improving soil and selecting the right plant material for the site conditions. All this helps to contribute positively to water quality and the health of our environment.

If you are considering converting your high maintenance lawn to a LILaC lawn, *you should first think about how much use your lawn gets.* LILaC lawns are best suited for low to medium use areas. Also, converting a high maintenance lawn to a LILaC lawn will take time, so you'll need to be patient – it will pay off in the long run.

Practicing LILaC strategies means thinking differently about how a healthy lawn looks. In the world of LILaC lawn care, it's OK to have a weed here and there – your lawn is still healthy. Controlling weeds and pests means assessing the severity of the problem and then targeting just the areas that need pesticide use or weed control, rather than applying to the entire lawn. *LILaC is a more focused effort.*



FEATURES OF LILAC

BENEFITS OF LILAC

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilizes low-maintenance grasses like fine leaved fescue and common types of Kentucky Bluegrass including varieties such as 'Park' and 'Kenblue'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low maintenance grasses thrive with less care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the condition of your soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides nutrients and a good root growing environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mow your grass higher and less often	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produces less noise, fewer emissions, and reduces time and labor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave grass clippings on your lawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recycles nutrients to your lawn
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimize use of fertilizers and pesticides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less potential for pollution

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I use some of the LILaC techniques without totally converting my existing lawn to a LILaC lawn?

Yes. Improving your soil is a good place to start. You can also gradually reduce your use of nitrogen fertilizers and water. Start mowing your grass higher, maintaining it at approximately 2-3 inches high, and leaving the grass clippings on the lawn. Remember not to mow more than 1/3 of your grass height at one time. If you have very long grass, set your mower as high as possible or weed whip it first. Then wait about a week and cut it again, gradually bringing it back to the desired height.

How long will it take to convert my lawn to a LILaC lawn?

Successfully converting a lawn takes time – about 2-3 growing seasons. Be patient! It is worth it in the end.

What can I do now to start improving my soil for the future?

Have a soil test done first to determine the overall condition of your soil and any specific needs. You can obtain a soil test kit from your county extension service or the University of Minnesota Soil Laboratory. You should also aerate your soil to reduce compaction. This should be done about every two years. Top-dress your soil with compost by lightly spreading a high-quality compost over your lawn about 1/4" thick. Lastly, leave those grass clippings on your lawn. They won't contribute to thatch build-up. If clumps of clippings are left behind, just rake and compost them.

How should I treat for weeds in a low input lawn?

First, determine the severity of the problem and why an area is weedy. Are the weeds in one area? What kind of weeds are growing there? Many of our annoying weeds in our home landscapes are warm weather plants, meaning that they grow most in the warmer months of mid-summer. Sometimes altering the growing environment helps by encouraging grass to grow. For example, pruning evergreen branches to increase sunlight in shady areas.

Spot treat for weeds vs. broadcasting or spraying weed control over the entire landscape. This will save money in herbicides, will keep any negative impact on the environment to a minimum, and will still manage your weed population.

FOR MORE INFO:

The University of Minnesota Extension Service offers extensive lawn care resources, available in print or online at www.extension.umn.edu

“Low Input Lawn Care” (Extension Publication FO-07552-GO) available online at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG7552.html