

Moss in Lawns

Moss growth in established lawns is a common problem. There are many misconceptions with regard to moss growth. For instance, it does not grow only on acid soils. Moss is not particularly aggressive or invasive. Essentially, moss grows wherever conditions are poor for the growth of turf grass:

- moderate to heavy shade
- poorly drained or compacted soils
- heavy traffic areas
- low soil organic matter
- poor soil fertility
- low soil pH (acid soil)

The key to controlling moss is to improve conditions for grass growth. A healthy vigorous stand of turf grass can easily out-compete and choke out moss. Various products are available to kill moss and some are reasonable effective – at least temporarily. Moss can also be removed by simply raking it out of the lawn. However, if the root cause is not corrected, the moss will invariably come back after any treatment.

Moss is best controlled by optimizing conditions for the growth of turf grass. Apply lime, compost, and fertilizer at the rates recommended on your soil test. Remove the moss using a garden rake and spot reseed as necessary. If your lawn's response to these treatments is poor, it may be necessary to reseed. Reseeding is the best time to improve your soil organic matter level, if needed, by tilling in compost. If poor grass growth is due to heavy shade or poorly drained soil, it may be best to consider alternative ground covers that are better suited to those conditions.