

## Lawn Aeration

### Description

Aerate lawns to improve nutrient and water uptake, reduce runoff, reduce compaction and help to control thatch.

### Basic Practice Guidelines

1. Aeration, or core cultivation, reduces soil compaction and helps control thatch in lawns while helping water and fertilizer move into the root zone.
2. A lawn can be aerated at any time the ground is not frozen, but should not be done when it is extremely hot and dry. Heavy traffic areas will require aeration more frequently.
3. Aeration is most effective when actual cores or plugs of soil are pulled from the lawn. Do not use spike-type aerators, which compact the soil. Holes should be two to three inches deep and no more than two to four inches apart. Lawns should be thoroughly watered the day before aerating so plugs can be pulled more deeply and easily. Mark all sprinkler heads, shallow irrigation lines and cable TV lines before aerating so those lines will not be damaged.
4. On thatchy lawns, it is important to leave the cores on the lawn, allowing them to work back into the grass. Otherwise, core removal is optional. Lawns may be fertilized and seeded immediately after aeration. There is no need to top dress lawns following aeration.
5. Aerate turf once or twice per year, as needed, in the early spring and/or late fall to aid in capturing the natural precipitation during non-weed germination periods and prior to adding organic materials and fertilizers.

BMP Type			
Design			
Installation			
Maintenance/Operation			X
Green Industry Relevance			
ASLA		GCC	
ALCC	X	ISA	
CALCP	X	RMSGGA	X
CGGA		WFC	
CNA			

### Regional or Industry Considerations/Adaptations

None identified.

### Key References

Associated Landscape Contractors of America. 2003. *Landscape Maintenance Training*. Herndon, VA: ALCA.

City and County of Denver. 2000. *Denver Landscape Design and Maintenance Guidelines for Water Conservation on City Owned and Operated Properties*. Denver, CO: City.

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension. 2003. *Lawn Aeration*. Planttalk Colorado 1505 ([www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1505](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/1505)). Ft. Collins, CO: CSU.