



MINNESOTA WATER  
LET'S KEEP IT CLEAN

# Organic Lawn Restoration 101



If you have more weeds than grass, lots of bare patches, or an “okay” lawn aspiring to greatness, this will help without adding unnecessary chemicals into your environment. You get the most bang for your buck by undertaking this process in late August/ early September, but it also works April to mid-May.



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## Ask: are the conditions right for grass? Or do I need to plant something else?

Grass needs sun. Even “shade” grasses prefer sun. If you have a lot of shade, plant something else—hosta, Wild ginger, wood mulch, Fine Fescues mixed with clover, Pennsylvania sedge, or a ground cover native to Minnesota (see the list below).



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## Aerate the soil

You don't need to rent an aerator. Do it manually with a shovel: insert the shovel as far into the soil as it will go and wiggle it around.



Pennsylvania sedge

### Non-turf groundcovers native to Minnesota:

Barren-strawberry, *Waldsteinia fragarioides*  
Wineleaf Cinquefoil, *Potentilla tridentata*  
Strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*  
Violets, *Viola* spp.  
Bush-honeysuckle, *Diervilla lonicera*

Chokeberry, *Aronia melanocarpa*  
Creepers, Virginia & Thicket, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* & *P. inserta*  
Sumacs, *Rhus glabra* & *R. typhina*  
Sweetfern, *Comptonia peregrina*



### Lay down a thin layer of compost

Use a quarter of an inch of quality compost.

#### To assess the quality of compost

Put it in a ziploc bag and leave it for 1-2 days; then open it and smell it. If it stinks, don't use it. This indicates the presence of anaerobic bacteria, which should be killed off in a healthy composting process.

Or you can put it into a pot and water it. If plants starts growing out of it, it's no good. Weed seeds should be killed off by sufficient heat in a healthy composting process.



### Lay down grass seed

3 lb. per 1000 sq. ft. of fine, no-mow fescue, or another grass seed that is well-suited to conditions.



### Water

Keep the soil moist during the first week or two. Thereafter, it needs 1" of water per week, whether from rain or your sprinkler.