



Is Your Lawn a LittleShady?

By Lisa Smith

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When I ask is your lawn shady, I dont mean is your lawn up to no good. Im asking if your lawn is getting all the lovin from the sun needed for good growth.

There are problems that can arise when you have too much shade. Low shade could reduce air movement, increase relative humidity, prolong wetness after a rainfall, increase disease problems, and encourage nasty moss and algae to grow. Those problems are just the tip of the iceberg, my friend.

To determine if your lawn is shady, you'll need to investigate the amount of sun in a particular area. Full sun (100% of available sunlight) and light shade (less than 100% but greater than 75%) are perfect growing conditions. However, areas with medium shade (less than 75% but greater than 25%) and heavy shade (less than 25%) are practically the kiss of death to a lawn. You may be able to skate by with medium shade, but you'll need to put in some work, honey!

So how do you determine whether you have any of the above light conditions? Do a light meter reading (on your day off, of course) in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. I'm simplifying this process a little; it's a tad more involved and you can find out how to calculate [here](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/homegrnd/htms/23alawns.htm) (<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/homegrnd/htms/23alawns.htm>).

What's the solution? A more drastic, and possibly expensive, solution would be to rip out a bunch of trees to reduce the shade. Meh! Try lopping off some branches instead to a height of 10 or more. Other solutions are fertilizing your lawn once or twice a year (depending on the type of grass), reducing the amount of trampling through your yard, aerating the soil, watering only when necessary during dry spells, and seeding shade-tolerant grasses.

It's not the end of the world if your lawn is a little shady. Just shift your lawn maintenance to accommodate areas where the sun doesn't shine.

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