



SPRING LAWN CARE GUIDE

Overview

The snow is melting, but before you grab the fertilizer, here is your game plan:

1. **The Clean Up:** Rake debris and matted grass to prevent snow mold.
2. **Patience is a Virtue:** Wait until mid-March/April to fertilize. Feeding too early just feeds the weeds!
3. **The 55° Rule:** Apply pre-emergent for crabgrass when soil temps hit 55°F (usually late March).
4. **Prep Work:** Now is the perfect time to edge beds and prune shrubs before they leaf out.
5. **First Mow:** Keep it at 3" and keep those blades sharp!

Pro-Tip: If you're seeding bare spots, skip the pre-emergent in those areas! They don't play well together.

10 Step Guide



1. The Critical First Cleanup

As soon as the ground is firm enough to walk on without leaving footprints, get out there. Removing fallen sticks, matted leaves, and winter debris isn't just about aesthetics—it prevents snow mold and allows the soil to "breathe" as it wakes up.

Pro-Tip: Don't forget the dog waste! High nitrogen concentration in pet waste can "burn" and kill dormant grass quickly as it tries to green up.



2. Identifying and Fixing Snow Mold

If you see gray or pink matted patches as the snow retreats, you're looking at snow mold. Don't panic—it's common in Indiana. The fix is simple: take a plastic rake and lightly fluff the grass. This improves airflow and dries out the fungus. Usually, the turf will grow out of it once temperatures consistently stay above 45°F.



3. The Danger of Early Fertilization

It's tempting to throw down "Step 1" on a sunny February day, but patience pays off. If you fertilize before the grass is actively growing, the nutrients often wash away or feed early-season weeds instead of your turf. Wait until mid-late March or April when you see consistent green growth.



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4. Master the Pre-Emergent Timing

Timing is everything for crabgrass prevention. In Indiana, the "magic window" is when soil temperatures hit 50–55°F for three consecutive days. This usually happens between late March and mid-April. If you miss this window, the crabgrass seeds germinate, and a standard pre-emergent won't stop them.



5. Repairing Bare Spots & Overseeding

Winter can be harsh on Hoosier lawns. If you have thinning areas, early spring (March/April) is a viable time to seed.

- The Golden Rule: You cannot use most pre-emergents (Crabgrass preventer) and grass seed at the same time. The chemical doesn't know the difference between a weed seed and a grass seed—it will stop both.



6. Strategic Watering

Usually, an Indiana spring provides more than enough "free" irrigation. You only need to pull out the hose if we hit an uncharacteristic dry spell or if you have just put down new seed. New seed must stay moist (not soaked) for 2–3 weeks to germinate properly.



7. The "First Mow" Protocol

Your first mow sets the tone for the season. Ensure your blades are sharpened—dull blades tear the grass, leaving it vulnerable to disease. Set your deck height to 3 inches. This height shades the soil, which naturally helps prevent weed seeds from germinating.



8. Edging and Bed Preparation

While the grass is still waking up, focus on the "frames." Late winter is the perfect time to redefine your mulch bed edges with a sharp spade. Clear out dead perennial stalks and ornamental grasses now so you don't accidentally cut back the new green shoots later.



9. Pruning for Growth

Most Indiana shrubs (like Boxwoods and Yews) and ornamental trees benefit from a "haircut" before they leaf out.

- Warning: Do not prune spring-blooming shrubs like Lilacs, Forsythia, or Azaleas yet. If you prune them now, you are cutting off this year's flower buds!



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10. Managing Pests and Grubs

You can cross this off your "To-Do" list for now. Grub treatments in Indiana are most effective when applied between May and July when the larvae are active and near the surface. Applying now is a waste of time and money.

Next Steps

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