

## Vibrant, Healthy Turf

Turf is an integral component of any Community landscape. It offers a valuable place for recreational activities for adults and children alike, so healthy, even turf is a top priority in any maintenance plan. Of course, it's necessary to employ reliable, smart horticultural practices while maintaining turf areas throughout the year. Frequently-used turf areas often suffer from soil compaction, which can result in a hard surface that does not allow for efficient water penetration, oxygen absorption by the roots, or the movement of nutrients from the surface into the root system. All of these processes are vital for healthy turf! To mitigate the effects of compaction, aeration is a useful method for breaking up compacted soil and adding space for water and nutrients to reach the turf root system effectively.



## Aeration Methods

There are different methods for aerating, and at its basic level, the process involves creating many small holes in the turf soil. One common method is using a solid metal tine (or a tool with several tines) to poke holes in the soil via gravity (hand-held tools rely on the user's weight), some sort of hydraulic downward pressure, or vibration.

Another method involves driving a hollow-core tine into the soil to remove a small cylindrical soil plug. These plugs remain on the turf surface but are often broken up by subsequent mowing. Golf courses utilize this aeration method regularly!

More often than you think, turf soil needs amendments, fertilizers, or both to address nutrient deficiencies or imbalances. Often prior to aeration, we'll collect soil samples and send them to a laboratory for analysis. The best time to apply a soil amendment and/or fertilizer is just after aeration, as they fill the holes and travel to the turf's root zone more rapidly. Through aeration, water and oxygen penetrate the soil more easily, promoting healthy turf.



Turf soil immediately after aeration

## Did You Know?

Compacted soils create an ideal environment for a fungus known as Fairy Ring.

