

## Composting the Lawn

**Prince William County Office**  
8033 Ashton Avenue, Suite 105  
Manassas, Virginia 20109  
703/792/7747 Fax: 703/792/4630

One of the easiest ways to keep your lawn healthy and green is to compost it 2-3 times a year. This is preferable for many people because it's safe and organic, and you're not constantly adding chemical-based fertilizers to your yard or garden.

Compost makes a great fertilizer, because in addition to having important nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, it often has trace elements you don't ordinarily find in commercial fertilizers.

1. Use fine-textured compost found bagged at garden centers or sold by the yard at the County landfill.
2. Spread the compost using a shovel or just start dumping the compost out around your lawn.

3. Rake it out evenly with a flexible, garden rake. Spread the compost out over your lawn to about ¼ inch thick. You want a fairly thin layer. Don't apply it much thicker thinking that more is better, because that can smother your grass. A thin layer will break down quickly releasing its nutrients into the lawn. When you're done raking you shouldn't see that much compost showing.



Taken from the Weekend Gardener website

4. Once you have a nice thin layer fairly evenly applied, if possible, water it in for a good 15 to 20 minutes. Take care of your lawn as you normally would, applying regular water, but don't mow for about 1 week. Allow the compost 7 to 8 days to break down and release its nutrients. After one week, you can care for you lawn just as you regularly would by mowing and watering.

### Compost calculations for topdressing

Area to cover (square feet) X depth of compost (inches) X 0.0031 = compost needed (cubic yards)

*Example:* 3,000 ft<sup>2</sup> X 0.25" X 0.0031 = 2.325 cubic yards of compost

Information for this publication was adapted from The Weekend Gardener website  
[www.weekendgardener.net/how-to/compost-lawn](http://www.weekendgardener.net/how-to/compost-lawn)

[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments. Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.