



# Spring Lawn & Garden Tips

By Steve Marier

Steve Marier, a Hugo native and the manager of Hugo Feed Mill and Hardware has been helping local residents for over 30 years with lawn and garden advice and solutions.

What a difference a year makes, with last year's recorded snow totals to this year of little snow and a very warm winter. April temps have been low 30's to mid 80's. Hopefully our weather has taken a turn for the best and those who have been patiently waiting for warmer weather before digging into their lawn and garden care can finally let loose this month. Remember to finish any April clean-up work before beginning to mow. Set your mower height at 3" to create space for healthy root development for spring and raise to 3 1/2" for summer (especially for non-irrigated lawns). Healthy roots prevent trouble down the road when the summer brings drier, warmer weather. Here are a few tips to get the most out of your lawn and garden this season:

## LAWN CARE

**CRABGRASS CONTROL:** Depending on spring temperatures, you may still have time to apply a pre-emergent to prevent crabgrass. Do not apply crabgrass preventer if you have dormant seeded last fall or plan on seeding this spring as this will not work once crabgrass has already germinated. If you're cutting acres, a pre- and post-emergent crabgrass control is ideal. Post emergent sprays can also be applied in mid-June or August to kill the crabgrass without harming your lawn. If you're unsure and want to ask questions, call the Hugo Feed Mill for assistance.

**BROADLEAF WEED CONTROL:** Mid-May to early June is a good time to spray for broadleaf's like Dandelion, Clover, Plantain and Knotweed. Hard to control broadleaf's, like Creeping Charlie, can be sprayed for in early May to mid May depending on spring temperatures. If you miss the window to spray them right now, your next opportunity to spray will be in September. For smaller suburban size lawns, we recommend spraying broad leaves with Weed Free Zone. Speed Zone or T-Zone should be utilized for hard-to-control weeds on a larger lawn, as it comes in larger quantities. For my own lawn, I tend to spot-spray for weed

control rather than use a weed and feed. Unless there are weeds everywhere, why spread an herbicide across your entire yard? The herbicide sprays work better on controlling your weeds than a granular weed and feed, and are rain-safe faster. If you spread a granular weed and feed, you have to wet your lawn first or apply right after a rain, spread the product and hope it won't rain for the following 36-48 hours to see optimal results, as it takes time for the plant to absorb it. The fertilizer will work, but the weed control will be washed away by the rain. For these reasons, the herbicide sprays work better and faster.

**FERTILIZER:** If you fertilized last fall AND did not apply a crabgrass control with fertilizer in the spring. You will want to fertilize between the end of May and mid-June. This action will feed your lawn all summer. If you're looking for a more low maintenance lawn, you may not have to apply fertilizer until September. Maybe you're okay cutting grass every 4 days to match a golf course lawn, or maybe you cut the grass every 10 days and infrequently water? It depends on the lawn results you want. As a general rule, the fertilizer I recommend (without taking a soil test) would be our 25-0-15 blend. It's 5% Sulfur and 2% Iron with 50% slow release nitrogen. This feeds your lawn over a steady period of time and prevents burning.

**PLUG AERATION:** Clay or compacted soils need plug aeration once or twice a year. However, if you applied crabgrass control this spring, plug aeration will create problems for your yard. The crabgrass control is designed to create a barrier in the soil. When you aerate, you're essentially breaking that barrier and crabgrass can return to those areas. If you have to aerate this spring because of compaction problems, and crabgrass isn't an issue, then wait until you've mowed at least two or three times.

**SEEDING:** Let's talk seeding. Spot seeding? Overseeding? New seeding? New seeding can be done in the spring, provided

**Family Owned Since 1923**



## Tired of Driving & Standing In Line Every Time You Need Something?

We're Your Local Home & Garden Store!

Friendly Service & Expert Advice Right Here in Hugo!

- Hardware & Home Repair
- Pet Food & Supplies
- Grilling Pellets
- Pest Control
- Lawn & Garden
- Carpet Shampoo Rental
- Bird Feeders & Seed
- Grass Seed & Fertilizer
- Screen Repairs & Keys Made

**5582 146th Street North**  
**Hwy 61 in Downtown Hugo**  
**(651) 429-3361**

**Mon - Fri: 7:30am - 6:00pm**  
**Saturday 7:30am - 2:00pm**

**Keep Your Lawn Looking Great This Spring!**  
 Visit our web site & sign-up today for our Timely Turf Tips newsletter:  
[www.HugoFeedMill.com](http://www.HugoFeedMill.com)  
 @hugofeedmill

you didn't apply a crabgrass preventer. Shaded areas can be overseeded, newly seeded, or spot seeded in the spring. I recommend overseeding in mid-August to mid-September. Once seeding is complete, come back with more fertilizer after 3 to 4 weeks. The second application of fertilizer is like hitting the rocket boosters, helping your new grass grow exponentially.

By applying crabgrass preventer in the spring and working on your broadleaf control, your lawn will be ready to overseed by mid-August to mid-September if needed. Why choose broadleaf and crabgrass control as a priority? If you don't control crabgrass, it usually wins out over any seeding attempts in the spring. It's pointless to put down seeds that won't survive.

The first step in any seeding project is to know your yard's square footage. As mentioned in last month's article, this will determine how much fertilizer and seed you'll need for the job. We can only apply ½ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, enough to get the grass going but not enough to burn it. For newly seeded areas, I recommend an application of 10-10-20 or 10-10-10 fertilizer at a rate of 5# per 1,000 square feet.

## VEGETABLE GARDENS

Are you eager to start your garden? Though you may have already planted your cold weather crops, it's now time for the rest! By mid-May our garden soil is warming up, so gardeners are able to plant cucumbers, beans, dill, sweet corn and a variety of other vegetables. Most years, Memorial Day weekend is when many gardens are planted. Remember— it all depends on weather, so be sure to watch the night temperatures. If they are dipping down into the 40's, it's not ideal to begin planting. Peppers and tomatoes like warm soil. A couple cold nights on a pepper or tomato plant could set it back a few weeks or completely freeze the garden out. Pumpkins and squash can be planted at the end of May or early June.

If you don't finish planting your garden by the end of May, don't worry. When I plant my garden, I start in early June, and finish planting peppers by the end of June. When timed correctly, there is no set back. There may be years that planting early works out, but that comes with the risk of having to replant should the weather not cooperate. Though you're excited, is it worth rolling the dice considering our often unpredictable Minnesota weather?

We've briefly touched on many topics in this article. For more information, or to obtain a more personalized plan based on your specific lawn and garden goals, just stop in or give us a call. Our reputation is built on your results. To sign up to receive our Timely Tips Newsletter please visit our web site at [www.hugofeedmill.com](http://www.hugofeedmill.com).



## LET'S GROW VEGGIES

There's nothing better than to go out to your garden and pick something from there and eat it. Now that's fresh produce! It doesn't make any difference if it's from a pot on your deck, a raised bed in your yard, a straw bale garden, or part of yard you tilled up. Whatever garden set-up works best for you, we can help you grow veggies.

Let's start with pots. I have had some experience planting peppers and tomatoes in pots (see header picture). When you pot peppers or tomatoes you want to make sure you use a good soil mix and fertilize them. Some varieties work better in pots than others – we can help you with selecting the right varieties and making sure you match up the pepper or tomato with the right size pot.

Lots of gardeners are going with raised beds. To get the most out of the raised bed, first draw up a plan on spacing your plants to get the max out of your garden. If you plant peas, radishes or lettuce, you can pull them out in mid-June when there done and plant more peppers.

Straw bale gardening works well for many gardeners. If your soil is terrible and you have a tough time keeping up with watering and weeding, straw bale gardening could be the answer. I've had a straw bale garden at the mill for many years and people are always amazed at how good my tomatoes look, even in late September. You do have some prep work to get the bales conditioned for planting. After that, I setup the bales with a soaker hose on a timer to water my plants. I will cage my tomatoes later and tie the cages to each other and to posts for additional support. Some of the benefits of straw bale gardens are little weeding, less disease, and the plants are off the ground for easy harvesting.

Now you've tilled up your garden plot and you are planning your garden. Lay out the garden rows to get the most out of your garden. Row width and plant spacing can vary with what you are planting. Visit our greenhouse this spring and when you get your plants and we can help you with your row and plant spacing. I fertilize my garden before I till and side dress my plants later in the season. For weed control I like to use landscape fabric which also works great in raised beds.

Watering your plants at the base of the plant instead of using sprinklers is the best. Setting up drip irrigation system works great as well. Be sure to stop in and see us for all your gardening needs and questions!

– Steve aka Dr. Pepper