

## Steps to a Healthy Lawn

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1. Determine the approximate area of lawn that you want improved, in acres or in square feet.
2. Take a soil test. (I suggest Waypoint Analytical at [www.waypointanalytical.com](http://www.waypointanalytical.com) because of their fantastic easy-to-read color graph. Use the form provided or I suggest calling the first time. Their website can be confusing.) Their website has instructions for taking a soil test.
3. As you take the soil test, pay attention to the depth of the topsoil. How far does the shovel go down? If you hit rocks or gravel at 3", you will need to add topsoil, in addition to the compost, because grass needs at least 5" of soil to grow. (This is often the problem in places where grass refuses to grow well.) Remember that topsoil and loam do NOT necessarily have organic matter in them!
4. Apply lime if recommended.
5. Spread compost in spring or fall. (times when the compost can readily be incorporated into the soil) If your lawn is chemically addicted to fertilizers, start compost in the fall and repeat in the spring, to prevent the lawn from crashing when fertilizer is withdrawn. It is also a good idea to aerate and possibly dethatch an addicted lawn, so the compost can move more rapidly down into the soil to the grass roots. It will take time for insects and earthworms to reestablish, if the lawn has been chemically treated for a long time.
6. Allow several months to see improvement. Organisms will do the work for you at no charge, but after all, they work at a snail's pace.
7. Allow: 1 cu yard compost per 1300 square feet of lawn.  
Or Allow one-two truckloads (about 16 cu yards) per 1/2acre. (an acre=43,560 sq. ft)
8. A dump truck carries between 5 and 15 cu yards, depending on truck size.  
A yard of compost is about 9 wheelbarrow loads.
9. Spread the compost:  
I offer \$15 hr. (plus a nice tip for a good job), to high school athletes who like a workout on the weekend. If you don't know any athletes, try leaving the coach a message at the HS athletic department, presenting your offer and asking for recommendations.
10. Compost need not be distributed at a perfect 1/4". I'd rake out clumps of more than 1" deep. Flinging it with a shovel spreads it out pretty well. If your lawn is somewhat healthy the worms and bugs will redistribute the compost through the soil.
11. An untreated lawn will respond nicely with one application. Two applications will provide a very nice lawn. A chemically addicted lawn may take 3 or more applications.
12. A cu yard of compost has more than 22 lbs. of nitrogen. (more than 4 bags of 10-10-10!!!), however it does not wash out of the soil, & it stays in the lawn if clippings are not removed!!
13. Local landscapers willing to spread compost:  
Nick at Bartlett Landscaping, Leominster, 978 606 1696 [nick@BartlettLandscaping.com](mailto:nick@BartlettLandscaping.com)  
Kevin Chabot, Sterling 978 353 9030 [Kchabot1113@gmail.com](mailto:Kchabot1113@gmail.com)

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