



Strong Lawns Enrich the Soil, Are Vital to Nature's Lifecycle

When thinking about grass it's usually in the context of front lawns, backyards or on a sports field, and its benefits as a living plant are rarely given much thought. But grass is an important and critical part of nature. Not only does it help enrich the soil, but grass strengthens soil, helping restore important nutrients.

Like other plants, grasses help build a world rich in life. Lawns are alive with dozens of largely beneficial insects including earthworms. The presence of earthworms actually signals the healthiness of the soil because these tiny tillers eat their weight in organic garbage that they later excrete in the form of nutrient-rich 'casts' – five times richer than available nitrogen, seven times richer than available phosphates and 11 times richer in available potassium than surrounding soil.

Just by crawling through the dirt earthworms improve the soil's aeration, creating passages for air and water to move through when they burrow through the dirt. This improves water infiltration and drainage, enhancing nutrient availability. Earthworms are also at the base of several food chains, serving as food to many species of birds and insects. In this way, soil plays a crucial role in the circle of life, providing the organic matter for worms that are eaten by creatures higher up the chain.

Lawns are home to other beneficial insects that help pollinate plants and serve as the base of many food chains. Rich soils teem with microbes that break down organic matter in the soil. These millions of microscopic organisms eat nature's leftovers that come from decomposing grass clippings, plant leaves and other vegetation.

Strong Grass Means a Balanced Ecosystem

Regularly caring for a lawn helps it grow resilient, and able to nurture and build organic matter in the soil. And as grass conditions and improves the health of soil, it in turn provides benefits to the surrounding ecosystem. To get the most benefit from grass' natural process, help nature along and build rich soil by:

- **Fertilizing:** Feeding a lawn provides it with nutrients that thicken the grass and build deep root systems. Homeowners can use a product specifically for lawns, such as Scotts® Turf Builder® fertilizer.
- **Nourishing:** For extra nourishment leave grass clippings on the lawn after mowing in order to recycle nutrients back into the soil.
- **Waiting for the rain:** Only water when grass needs it, and look for signs like a dull color or wilting blades that indicate it's time. Grass needs water to thrive, but Mother Nature usually provides enough to support strong grass and other soil life.

Grass Works With Nature

Well-nourished grass restores soils on land harmed by erosion, fire and other ecological damages. Grass works to sustain its surrounding ecosystem and create fertile soil. Some of the world's richest soil lies under grasses, like those found in North American prairies; but even under a well-maintained lawn in a regular neighborhood it's easy to find rich soil. Horticulturists often recommend using grass to restore nutrients to depleted soils. Under lawns the soil is full of beneficial insects and nutrient-filled organic

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