

# Lawn Care Maintenance Practices

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# Turfgrass Maintenance Practices

- Mowing
- Watering
- Fertilizing
- Aerating/Thatching
- Pest Management



# Common Turfgrasses in Pierce County Lawns

- Bentgrass- light-medium green, spreads by stolons (runners)
- Perennial ryegrass- medium-dark green, grows in a “bunch” habit
- Fine fescue- fine leaf blade, more shade tolerant, sometimes seen in mixes with bent or rye



Bentgrass



Perennial ryegrass



Fine fescue

# Mowing Height

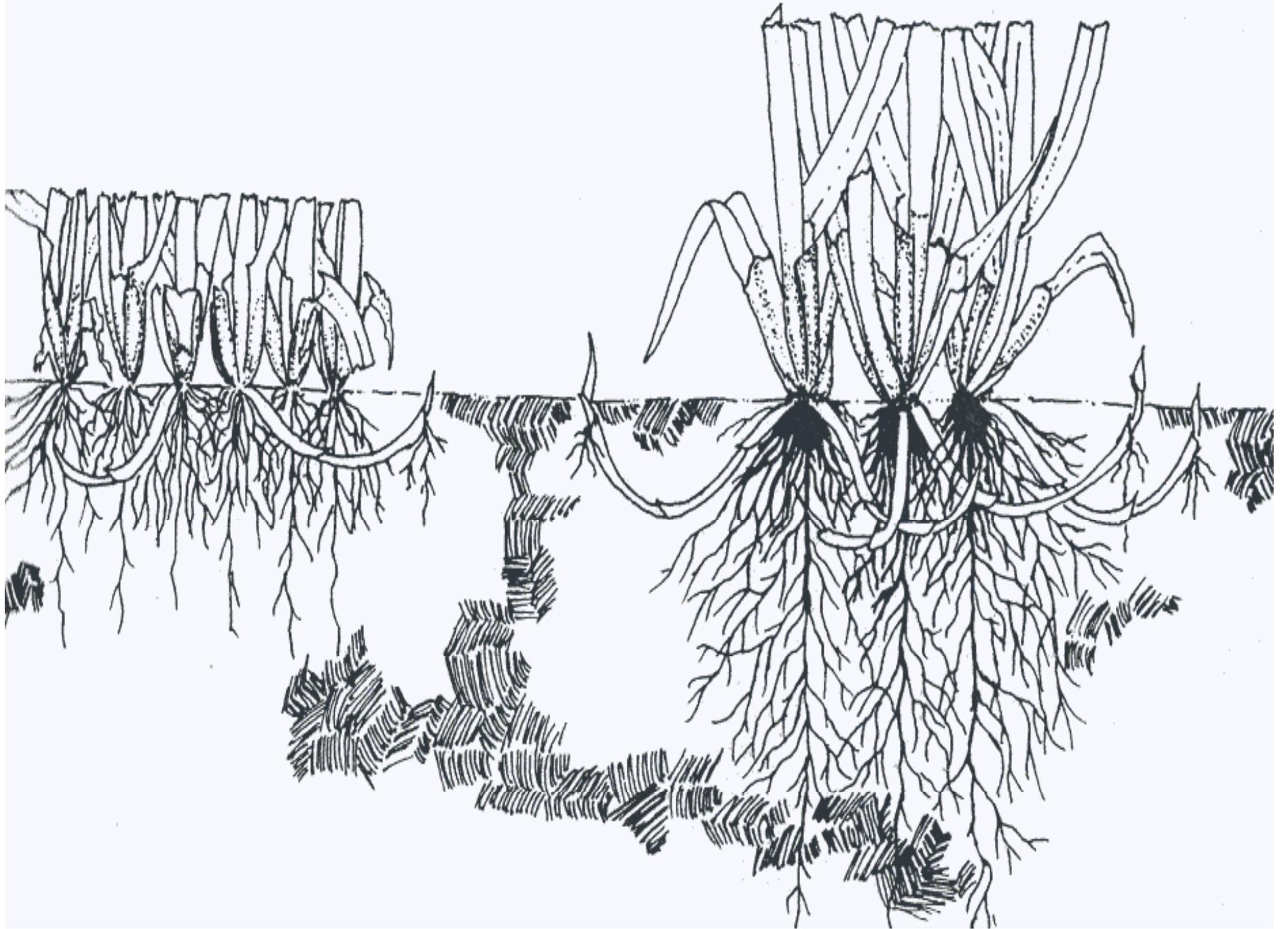
- Ryegrass 2 - 2 ½”
- Bentgrass 1 - 1 ½”
- Fine fescue- ~2”
- Why mow a little higher?
  - Greater traffic tolerance
  - Deeper root growth
  - Water conservation



Rotary blade mower



Reel blade mower



# Mowing Tips

- Don't remove more than one-third of leaf blade
  - If grass is too high, mow high, then lower next time
- Sharp blades = Clean cut = Less disease potential and better appearance
  - Sharpen blades in winter, consider sharpening several times per year



# Selling the mulch mow

- Fertilizer need can be reduced by  $\frac{1}{4}$
- Labor time to mow can be reduced
- Green waste removal cost can be reduced
- Golf courses practice mulch mowing widely
- Mulch mowing is recommended by WSU  
(Publication EB 0482)

## Selling the Mulch Mow (cont'd)

- Emphasize that new mulching mowers are more effective at dispersing clippings, mowing blades are sharpened on a regular basis (don't compare to home lawns)
- Show them that clippings can be mulched and be practically invisible

# Common Complaints

- Clumping
- Dragging clippings into building
- “Thatch issues”

# “Clumping” - Clipping management

- Clean-up laps to keep clippings off hard surfaces
- Remove clippings from hardscapes
- If needed, run a syringe cycle to knock down clippings



Courtesy of [toro.com](http://toro.com)

# Addressing Barriers to Mulch Mowing

- Mow a little higher-  
2- 2 ¼ ” for perennial rye
- Collect clippings in critical or “high visibility” areas
- Don’t mulch mow in wet or excessive growth conditions



# Thatch management

- Common “argument” against mulch mowing
- Mulch mowing does not contribute to thatch - proven by university research
- Clippings break down in 3-5 days (they are 80% water)
- Emphasize that you monitor thatch on a regular basis and are pro-active in managing thatch
- Some thatch provides benefit



# Conclusions

- Emphasize the horticultural benefits
- Emphasize the (potential) cost savings
- Emphasize commitment to top level appearance
- Emphasize that you won't mulch mow if conditions to not permit.

**Thank You!**

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