



THE Sunshine Scoop

North America's Grounds Care Specialists

Helping You Improve Your Green Investment

Landscapes are one of the hardest-working parts of any living or working environment. Your lawn and trees clean and filter water and air, produce a tremendous amount of oxygen, provide natural air conditioning in summer and add to your property's insulation in the winter. Turf and trees also absorb sound very efficiently for more peaceful surroundings.

And besides all of these practical, scientific benefits, most trees and shrubs provide a changing kaleidoscope of color and texture throughout the seasons of the year. When you consider the

aesthetics of natural beauty, combined with the health-giving benefits, your lawn and landscape become an excellent investment.

Our goal in this newsletter is to help you enjoy your lawn and landscape more. We'll keep you informed of news and pass on ideas and suggestions that can help. We'll try to explain how and why things happen the way they do and remind you of important seasonal needs.

So stay tuned and enjoy the season. Together we'll make the most of your investment in "green commodities."

FAMILY UPDATE

We've been asked by customers, "How is Sunshine able to keep the local feel and personal touch that we've always had, even though we're coast to coast?"

The answer to that question lies in the franchise partners that have joined the Sunshine team. Each location shares the same core values that Sunshine was built upon. Each franchise provides quality services to its neighborhood and community, and each customer is the most important customer. As a customer of Sunshine, you're never just a number. We asked Chris and Jen Szarvas, our franchise partners in the Cambridge, Guelph and Kitchener area, a few questions. We hope you enjoy reading their answers:

1. What do you see as the secret to maintaining a list of happy customers?

We believe that if you have happy employees, in the end you will have happy customers. Employees who really enjoy their jobs will do a good job, because they take pride in their work. A nice-looking property satisfies everyone in the end. We also like to accommodate customer requests as quickly as possible. If someone wants to meet to discuss the contract or a particular situation, it's important to see them within 24 hours so they understand that we care as much as they do.

2. Do you consider your Sunshine Grounds Care franchise a "family business," and why?

It's definitely a family business. Not only do we feel a part of the original Sunshine family, but my wife and I work as a team to make our franchise a success. It's important for us to delegate the work based on each other's strengths. With my sales and landscaping background, I'm better suited in the field working directly with the crews and customers. However, with my wife's marketing and design background, she is best put to use in the office. It really works for both of us.

3. What are the core values or principals that you and your team apply to your business?

Every customer is a potential lead to another customer.

4. Why do you see Sunshine as the best option for your customers' grounds care needs?

Looking at the website, any customer should be proud to have a team that looks good and runs a business well. We provide a clean image that is supported by great-looking uniforms, respect for our customers, and a well-trained staff. Sunshine cares.

5. What do you enjoy most about the grounds care business?

Instant gratification! There's nothing more satisfying than finishing work on a property and seeing the final product. Working outdoors is so rewarding. Each customer's lawn is like our own personal office.

6. How do you see the future for Sunshine Grounds Care in the Tri-Cities area?

Over the past three years here, we've been able to tap into the way people think and act. Our territory has a high quality demand with an environmentally friendly focus. They expect a great job at a reasonable price, and we try our best to provide them with it. With the help of local advertising, hard work and word-of-mouth referrals, we're becoming the industry leader here in the Tri-Cities one customer at a time.



Chris Szarvas



Make Your Patio Prettier

CREATE YOUR OWN CONTAINER GARDEN!

If you're looking for ways to spruce up that drab patio, a container garden can work wonders. It's easy to create, and it's a great way to add interest and color to your outdoor space.

With a patio container garden, you have more control than when planting in the ground. Plants that aren't getting enough sun can be moved around, and if soil isn't draining properly, you can simply add more holes to the container.

There are many types of containers to choose from, including planter boxes, wooden barrels, hanging baskets, large clay pots and more. You might even consider a cast-iron urn or an old kettle! Ideally, your container will have drainage holes about ½" across. If not, you should line the bottom of the container with at least 1" of gravel to aid in soil drainage.

For your planting medium, compost works very well. Otherwise, you can use a good-quality commercial potting mix, or make your own by combining sand, loamy garden soil and peat moss.

You should water your container plants whenever the soil feels dry (this might be daily during the hot, arid days of summer). Regular applications of a diluted liquid fertilizer are also recommended to provide your plantings with adequate nutrients for healthy growth.

As far as plant choices go, you may want to consider these design tips:

- Your plants should be no more than twice the height of the container and no more than 1½ times as wide.
- A showy container will go best with a simple plant, while a showy plant will go best with a simple container.
- Don't use large containers for small plants, and don't use small containers for large plants.
- Contrasting colors will provide drama and visual impact.
- Different shades of just one color will create a sense of harmony and tranquility.

You're really only limited by your imagination, so don't be afraid to experiment in your quest for a prettier patio!



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WHY THE HEAVY THATCH?



Every lawn has a thatch layer consisting of living and dead plant parts, including crowns, stems and surface roots (otherwise known as tillers and rhizomes). A thatch layer of ½" or less is beneficial, since it helps to retain moisture in the soil and keeps soil temperatures more even. However, when the thatch layer exceeds ½" in thickness, it becomes a problem.

Over ½" of thatch encourages lawns to start rooting in the thatch layer instead of the soil. This leads to shallow roots and a lawn that's more susceptible to stress. Heavy thatch also promotes fungus diseases, serves as a home for turf-damaging insects, and makes it more difficult for water and fertilizer to reach the root system.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Thatch can build up to unhealthy levels for a variety of reasons, including:

- **Soil type** – Heavy clay soils or very light, sandy soils with little or no organic material aren't very good at breaking down thatch.

- **Grass type** – Some cultivars of bluegrass and fine fescue spread by producing lots of rhizomes, which are a main component of thatch.
- **Lawn care practices** – Lawns that don't receive regular care and maintenance have a higher concentration of dead or dying grass plants, which contribute to the make-up of the thatch layer.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Moderately thick thatch layers can be broken up with verti-cutting (also known as dethatching). In severe cases of thatch build-up, more extensive forms of lawn renovation (such as sod removal and replacement) may be necessary.

Of course, it's best to avoid thatch problems altogether. You can do this by having your lawn core aerated every fall, which will help to keep the thatch layer at ½" or less. For more information on thatch control, call Sunshine Grounds Care today.

SUNSHINE GROUNDS CARE – HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

My goal as a Sunshine service representative is to dazzle you with a quick and thorough response to your service requests. To do this, we have developed a state-of-the-art customer care system.

INTRODUCING THE SUNSHINE “CASE” SYSTEM.

When you call customer service, my friendly receptionist will ask you for your name and the details of your request. A CASE will be created and sent immediately to me via wireless e-mail, outlining the details of your call. Once the details are entered into the system, you may request to be connected to my cell phone.

If I’m in a meeting or on a job site and can’t take your call, I will call you back as soon as it’s safe to do so. Once I’ve handled your request, I’ll close the case and you’ll be notified by e-mail.

Your request will also be tracked by my customer service team to

ensure a speedy response. We’ve come a long way from taking customer calls while driving down the road and scribbling notes on a scrap of paper in the truck!

The result? Happy customers!

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME:

- **Call: 1-800-361-LAWN** – Give me a call Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. EST in the summer, and 24/7 during winter storms.
- **E-mail: customercare@sunshinegrounds.com** – Sometimes you just feel like sending a quick e-mail. No problem. Simply e-mail your request, and I will be right on it!
- **Web: 24/7 self-dispatch portal** – In an increasingly connected world, customer self-service, for many, has become a way of life. As a customer, you have access to our 24-hour web-based self-dispatch portal. Visit sunshinegroundscare.com/login.htm and create a CASE anytime, anywhere.

“Our property managers use the “self-dispatch” website to quickly contact our Sunshine service reps. It is especially convenient in the winter when snow and ice storms happen overnight. It provides an excellent resource for us, as customer service is the main focus of our organization.”

K Shelley – VP Commercial Real Estate, Transglobe Property Management

SUNSHINE’S RAPIDLY GROWING FRANCHISE NETWORK NOW HAS LOCATIONS IN:

London
Cambridge
Oakville
Mississauga West

Mississauga East
Brampton
Vaughan
Markham

Newmarket
Caledon
Adjala
Barrie

Collingwood
Ottawa
Vancouver, BC
Little Rock, AR

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TODAY TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SERVICES SUNSHINE GROUNDS CARE PROVIDES IN YOUR AREA.

Lawns at Rest

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A LAWN GOES DORMANT?

Summer’s hot, dry weather can be very tough on your lawn, especially if you aren’t taking steps to provide extra water in the absence of rainfall. If irrigating your turf isn’t feasible this summer, you can expect it to turn brown in color as it goes into a state of dormancy.

Though a dormant lawn may look dead, it really isn’t. Instead, it has simply gone into a resting state as a means of protection. While in this dormant state, lawns concentrate any moisture they can get in the roots and crowns (the base of the leafy portion of the grass plant).

How well a lawn bounces back from dormancy depends on how long it’s subjected to hot, dry conditions and what state it was in when summer weather arrived. For example, if a lawn has heavy thatch and a weak root system to begin with, it will be

more prone to long-term damage from being allowed to go dormant.

Dormant lawns can be expected to initiate new growth when rainfall increases and temperatures cool down, usually in early September. However, some plant loss is to be expected if the dormant period is lengthy and temperatures stay very high (above 90° F). In cases like these, renovation practices such as aeration and overseeding will probably be necessary in the fall.

If you do allow your lawn to go dormant, you should at least supply ½" of water every three to four weeks in order to keep the roots and crowns alive. But if you’d like to avoid dormancy altogether, you’ll need to provide water regularly in the absence of rainfall. For more information on turf irrigation, call Sunshine Grounds Care today.



Dormant lawns may look dead, but they’re really in a resting state.

7 Simple Reasons for Maintaining a Healthy Lawn

A well-maintained lawn can help to provide a healthier, more pleasant environment for you, your family and your community. Here are some interesting facts about lawns that you may not be aware of:

1. A 50' x 50' lawn produces enough daily oxygen for a family of four.
2. Grass acts as a natural air conditioner by absorbing the sun's heat.
3. Grass helps to clean the air, absorbing pollutants and returning pure oxygen in exchange.
4. A thick, healthy lawn naturally

deters allergy-causing weed pollen.

5. Noise is reduced in areas where lawns are present (soft-surfaced landscapes absorb sound, while hard surfaces reflect it).
6. Thick turf filters surface water before it returns to ground water supplies.
7. Grass works as a natural barrier to soil erosion caused by wind and water.

Sunshine does not spray chemicals. However, we would be happy to talk to you about the non-chemical



alternatives to a healthy lawn.

By keeping your lawn in top shape, you'll be rewarded with a wealth of benefits in return. For more information on keeping your lawn healthy, call Sunshine Grounds Care today.

QUICK TIPS FOR SUMMER WATERING



YOUR LAWN

During the growing season, your turf needs an average of 1" to 1½" of water per week from rainfall and/or sprinkling. You should water deeply, but not too often, since deep watering encourages deeper rooting and better health. It's best to soak the soil to a depth of 6" each time, and you should try to water early in the morning to avoid evaporation. Give extra attention to hot or dry areas along pavement or in full sun, as well as slopes and hillsides.

YOUR TREES AND SHRUBS

If your trees and shrubs don't receive enough water this summer, they may end up wilting, losing leaves and suffering permanent damage. A long, slow watering once per week should be enough to keep them properly irrigated. Soaker hoses or low, wide-area sprinklers are ideal for watering your trees and shrubs during the summer, but be sure to leave them in place three times as long as you do when you water your lawn or flower beds.

It's a Fact!

TREES CONSERVE ENERGY

Trees planted near your home can shield it from the summer sun's rays. Both deciduous trees and evergreens insulate to keep inside temperatures more pleasant and reduce air conditioning needs by 10% to as much as 50%. Trees have a cooling effect not only by casting shade, but because water evaporates through their leaves. This process, known as transpiration, cools the surrounding air.



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