

Lawn Aeration Guide



Lawn aeration is a popular lawn care technique, which helps air to penetrate into your lawn's soil. As everything else on this world, grass also needs air to survive, and as time passes the soil of your green space becomes compacted and firm and the roots of the grass can not develop well. This results into an ugly looking lawn and a lot of hard labour to repair it. So, lawn aeration should be a mandatory lawn maintenance chore and today you will learn how to recognise when it is needed, what tools you need to conduct it, and how to conduct it the right way.

So, lets start with how to recognise that your lawn needs aeration. There are a few signs which are very easily recognisable:

1. Your lawn certainly needs aeration **if it is heavily used as a playground by children and pets.** High traffic lawn areas get really hard and eventually start losing their charm. Such lawns should be aerated in order to preserve their colour and alluring looks.
2. **The lawn was used as a storage area during construction work.** Usually the top layer of the grass gets buried under all kinds of materials and junk and together with the layer beneath it, they get compacted by the traffic from the construction workers. Such a lawn needs to be aerated, after it is cleaned from the junk, of course.
3. **If your lawn feels spongy when you step on it, but it dries out too quickly, then you might have a problem.** Usually that is excessive thatch. To find out if you have such a layer, take a spade and dig a four-inch deep slice of soil. If the thatch layer is thicker than half inch, then you need aerating.
4. **Soil layering** is also a great sign that you need to aerate your lawn. It happens when a lawn has been established by sod. **Soil layering means that finer soil covers the already existing coarser soil in your lawn.** This is a serious lawn issue which stops root development, due to the fact that all the water is held in the finer soil and does not drain down under the established one. By aerating your lawn you break the layering and let the water soak into the coarser layer of soil.

When to Aerate a Lawn?

Lawn aeration can be conducted any time between March to November. *Just avoid extremely wet soil and days in which frosts are imminent.* In any other circumstances you can use your lawn aerating tools.

There are different techniques to aerate a lawn, and they are used for different purposes, and are conducted at different times during the year. For example, **pricking or shallow spiking with lawn aerator sandals, sarel roller or with a garden fork** should be done prior to seeding, watering, fertilising or in the drier months when the showers aren't very intensive.

In spring and autumn, Gardeners Bristol recommend that you use flat spikes to slit or chisel tin your lawn, instead of using the usual round spikes. There are such attachments for ride on mowers and other powered equipment, but such machines are pretty expensive. **You could probably use professional lawn care services instead.** But if you have a slitter don't hesitate to use it in spring and autumn. You can even aerate with it in October and November. Just be careful for frosts.

Coring is another aerating technique for the autumn. It is done with hollow tine aerators. The best time for this procedure is **from the end of August to the middle of October.** This is the time of the year when the weather gets wetter and *your grass will have time to recover.* **Coring is a more aggressive technique** and your lawn will need some time to restore its colour.

What tools to use to aerate your lawn?

There are different types of lawn aerators on the market. They all serve for different purposes and are used for different types of aeration.

Lawn Aerators Sandals or Shoes



These are very convenient, as you can manage other lawn care chores while they are on your feet. They can make from 1 inch deep holes to 6 inch ones. The first two inches are the most important, of course. The lawn aerator shoes or sandals **are not recommended to be used on slopes,** but only on your even lawn. **It is also a good practice to put your aerating sandals/shoes**

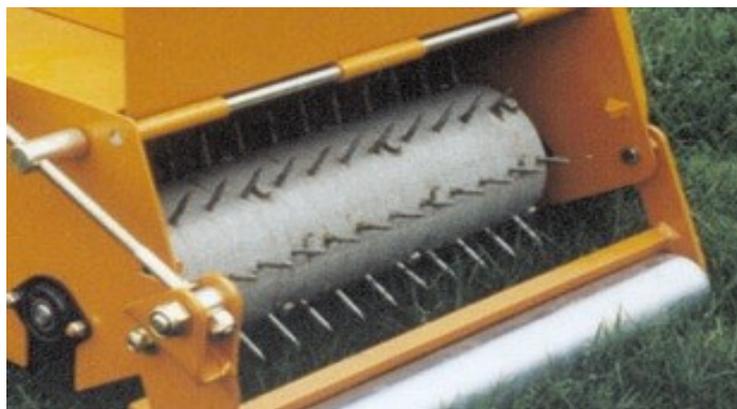
on when you are already on your lawn. Don't put them on your patio, in your shed, or on the driveway, as the spikes **might get stuck on the wood or get dulled by the concrete.** [Lawn care experts from Bristol](#) also recommend that you wear boots underneath your lawn aerating shoes.

Rolling Lawn Aerator



There are two types of rolling lawn aerators. **The first type is a roller with fixed spikes** on it and **the other is spring loaded.** *The roller with the fixed spikes is easier for work, as it requires less effort to push the spikes into the soil.* The rollers are very appropriate for big lawns, and even such which have slopes. They don't make as dense holes as the aerating shoes, but they are easy and fast for operation and you can roll through your lawn several times. **Avoid using the rolling lawn aerators on too hard or too muddy soil.**

Sarel Roller



This is another type of rolling aerator, **but it is a bit more expensive and heavy.** Its surface is covered with a lot of half spikes, which prick the surface of the lawn. It is not as effective as the above tools, although it also allows air and water penetrate into the soil. **It can't replace the coring and spiking.**

Powered Machinery



It is only worth the money if you have a lawn bigger than 500 square metres. Anything that is below this number can be managed with a manual aerator. But if your lawn is really big, then you better purchase a powered lawn aerator.

Hollow Tine Fork Aerator



This is another manual tool which **is used for coring**. It digs out bigger holes into the ground and relieves compaction pretty well. **This tool is recommended by [Gardeners Bristol](#) to be used in autumn, as it also helps the lawn dry out more easily.** Especially, when there is too much moss on it. *Mind that all dug out pieces of soil should be removed after you finish coring.* They can be raked, left to dry and used as a compost or as a top-dressing material for your lawn.



Except the manual hollow tine aerator, which looks like a garden fork, **there also are powered tine aerators.** *They are quite expensive to buy, but they are available at hire shops.* **Mind that those can be pretty dangerous if you have rocks in your lawn.** They bounce a lot and might cause you trouble. An useful advantage if you buy such a machine is that in most cases **the hollow tines can be replaced with spikes**, so you can use them for spiking, too. **But, again, be careful with them.** You should also know that they don't make holes as deep as the ones made from the hollow tine fork aerator.

I think that is most of the info that you need to know about lawn aeration. If you meet any inconveniences or troubles aerating your lawn on your own, don't hesitate to call for professional help. **There are a lot of lawn care and garden maintenance companies in Bristol which will help you at a very reasonable price.**

This guide was politely brought to you with the help of [Gardeners Bristol](#)

