

Spring HOME IMPROVEMENT

How to make your lawn look like a lush golf course

Have you ever been on a golf course or watched a tournament on TV and thought, "How do I get my lawn that green?" While thick, lush, healthy grass takes some strategy (and time), it is possible to achieve at home with some tips and tricks from lawn care experts.

As the Official Lawn Care Treatment Provider of the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions and TPC Network, TruGreen knows what it takes to achieve a golf-course ready lawn. Both TruGreen and the PGA TOUR implement science-driven agronomic practices to deliver the best living and playing conditions. Here, the lawn care company shares tips for homeowners to achieve golf course green grass that will be the envy of the neighborhood:

Test pH levels

For your lawn to look its best it needs adequate nutrients and the

right amount of hydration for your region. To achieve this, contact a lawn care professional to test your soil pH levels in the spring to see if any adjustments should be made. With the right scientific expertise, they can identify, and tailor, the right solution for optimal hydration.

Taming weeds

There are two kinds of weeds: annual and perennial. Both grow when they have access to resources (water, sunlight, soil nutrients). That means the best way to eliminate weeds is with a healthy dense grass that doesn't leave room for weeds to establish and grow. Timing is of the essence when it comes to weed control, so it's important to bring in a professional at the first sign of weeds to apply a treatment before they start popping up across your lawn.

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LAWN from page 14

Homeowners can often apply lawn care products excessively or improperly, which can waste money and cause damage to the lawn.

“Just like there isn’t a singular blueprint for a PGA TOUR golf course, there isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach to lawn care,” said Brian Feldman, director of technical operations at TruGreen. “With so many complexities to individual lawns, a service professional with tailored, localized solutions can help you achieve a lush lawn of which you’re proud.”

Adequate watering

Great grass needs just the right amount of water to be lush without oversaturation. Strive to water your lawn one or two times a week, avoiding peak evaporation time between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Remember that watering may vary month to month based on weather conditions. Sandy soils or drought conditions require more water, but always consider any watering restrictions in your area.

Consider aeration and seeding

Aerating the soil means using a special machine to

remove small plugs of soil that extract thatch, helping open the ground to more nutrients and water penetration. Seeding after aerating encourages germination and root growth. Commonly performed during the summer for southern regions and the fall for northern regions, professionals can help identify the best time for aeration and seeding specific to your lawn.

“A healthy and happy championship lawn takes expert care and time,” said Feldman. “Partnering with a professional service provider, such as TruGreen, can help alleviate some of the stress of getting your lawn fit for a major.”

All these steps can help you take the guesswork out of lawn care maintenance. For additional help, consult with a lawn care professional such as TruGreen to achieve a lawn that looks just like what the pros play on.

—BrandPoint

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Three privacy questions to ask before buying a smart thermostat

Smart home devices are everywhere. From smart speakers to kitchen appliances to thermostats, these devices are helping people live a more convenient, comfortable life. How this happens is through technology that often analyzes your habits and patterns. While there are significant advantages to using smart technology, it's important to consider: How much of your privacy are you giving up while using smart home devices?

According to a report from the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC), data security and privacy remain a top concern for consumers. Nearly two-thirds of all survey respondents said they are concerned about potential data leaks, and 45% of those who do not have a smart home device see data privacy as a barrier to purchasing.

One smart home device that is growing in popularity is a smart thermostat. This is in part due to the many benefits it offers, including the ability to save money, use energy more efficiently and have a comfortable house year-round. To be most effective, a smart home device can virtually "feel" and "listen" to

what is happening in your home. That's why, as you consider a smart thermostat from one of the many companies in this fast-growing market, asking a few key questions can help you better understand how they use your information.

What data are they collecting - and what will they do with it?

Review the company's terms of service and privacy policy carefully to understand the type of information

it is collecting and how it will use it. Reputable companies should have strong consent management that puts you in the driver's seat of your own information.

In particular, watch for how companies use your activity data. Even if a company confirms it does not share or sell your data to third parties, it is possible it may still be using your thermostat data (such as when you are home or not home) for other purposes

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from preceding page

beyond heating and cooling your house.

Does the thermostat require you to integrate with a larger platform?

Does the product require you to use its smart home platform or have other requirements to use the basic features of the thermostat? Activities like these often give companies easy access to your data. You should be able to easily use your thermostat without jumping through hoops.

Are they recording what you say?

Some smart thermostats include a microphone so you can use your voice to interact with the thermostat. If it has a microphone, do you know how that information is being used or stored? If this is a concern for you, there are smart thermostat options without microphones available.

Selecting the right smart thermostat

Smart thermostats are increasingly common in homes worldwide - and for good reason. They enable homeowners to easily control their ideal temperature and even lower their energy costs through the touch of a smartphone. The key with any smart home product is to do your research to ensure you are buying a smart thermostat that meets your needs without sacrificing your privacy.

Emerson, a trusted thermostat manufacturer with over a 100-year history in the HVAC industry, offers one such option with its Sensi smart thermostats. Upon initial account setup, Emerson only collects basic information and is transparent in the fact that it does not sell your personal information or leverage your thermostat activity data for other targeting or advertising purposes.

You don't need to trade your privacy for energy savings and a comfortable home. To learn more about smart thermostats that prioritize your data privacy, visit Sensi.Emerson.com/DataPrivacy.

— BrandPoint

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Low-cost ways to revamp living areas

Home improvement projects require substantial financial investment. But just because a homeowner wants to bring a fresh look indoors doesn't mean he or she has to break the bank along the way.

Living rooms are some of the most frequently used spaces in a home, and they can use an update from time to time to stay on trend or to make the area more functional for a changing family dynamic. Here are some budget-friendly ideas for breathing new life into living room designs.

- **Establish the budget.** Homeowners should figure out how many dollars they can designate to a living room makeover before purchasing supplies or hiring out the work. Figure out

the scope of the remodel, visit stores or suppliers to price out materials, get estimates from contractors, and then plan for some unforeseen circumstances along the way to determine if this type of renovation is affordable. If not, scale things back until the project more closely aligns with your budget.

- **Change the paint color.** Lighter and brighter colors are on trend. A can or two of paint can do wonders for updating a space without a large financial commitment. Pair that new paint color with new window coverings and complementary throw pillows to pull the theme together with minimal expense.

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• **Update the flooring.** Tired, outdated carpeting or other flooring can use an overhaul. While solid hardwood flooring may be preferable, there are

many types of laminate flooring that mimic the looks of popular wood colors and styles for a fraction of the cost. Plus, many are sold at home improvement retailers and even at warehouse clubs or online for reasonable prices. Laminate flooring also may be a



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• **Introduce a fireplace.** Fireplaces were once hot commodities, but that popularity waned in the 1970s and 1980s. Homeowners with chimneys may discover a fireplace was boarded over and the bare bones still exist that can be renovated to bring back character. There also are ventless freestanding units that are quite affordable that can mimic the look of a built-in fireplace.

• **Reupholster instead of replace furniture.** There's no need to throw away quality furniture if the fabric is the only thing impeding design. New upholstery or even a slipcover can update designs.

• **Conquer clutter.** Rather than adding something to the living room, remove clutter to give the room a more airy feel. This can instantly change the look of the room. Use cord covers to tame plugs for electronics and remove unnecessary furniture from the room.

• **Improve lighting.** Another easy and often inexpensive fix is to change lighting fixtures, including using brighter, more energy efficient LED bulbs, and to assess lighting needs to eliminate dark corners of rooms that can make the space seem drab.

Living room spaces in need of an update often can benefit from improvements that go easy on the wallet.

— Metro

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The photo on top left shows a dark woodgrain kitchen that was refaced with a light cherry woodgrain, plus new doors and drawer fronts to brighten up kitchen. The same kitchen could have been refaced with any woodgrain or solid color you see in the photo of sample doors.



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