

MOSS

WHY MOSSES OCCUR? It is important to understand that mosses occur when some underlying condition allows them to out compete grasses and other plants. Often, moss is a symptom rather than the actual problem. These conditions most frequently are some combination of:



- Poorly drained, persistently wet soils
- Acidic soil conditions
- Medium to dense shade
- Repeated “scalping” of turf on uneven terrain
- Compacted soils

HOW TO REDUCE THE COMPETITION FROM MOSS: If the problems that are limiting the turf or other plant growth are not corrected, any moss elimination or control efforts will be futile. First, identify which of the above factors are likely contributing to the occurrence of the moss. What is your soil pH? If you do not know, then a soil test is required.

Next, is the site poorly drained? If so, install drainage or regrade the area to promote water removal. Mosses thrive in these conditions, whereas grasses struggle.

The third factor that likely is limiting the grass is lack of sunlight. Many species of moss are tolerant of dense shade and prefer moist soil in the shaded areas. Removing trees from the area would fix the shade problem but is almost never acceptable to the landowner. Simply pruning trees to remove lower limbs or thinning the canopy improves grass growing conditions.

If moss occurs in sunny spots, mower “scalp” may be the cause. Scalping severely weakens turf grass and allows moss to thrive. Smooth the uneven places in the lawn by topdressing with soil, regrade the area or use a smaller mower in uneven areas.

Compacted soils also give moss a competitive advantage. Use a core aeration machine to alleviate compaction and improve turf grass growing conditions.

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL: Physically removing moss with a rake is one way to get rid of moss, but it is essentially impossible to get every single piece of this very simple but durable organism. Remove all vegetative material that you possibly can, scratch the soil, and reseed with a turf grass that best fits the site.



CHEMICAL CONTROL: There are no easy chemical solutions to moss. Please call the Noxious Weed Control Office for advice on chemical control.

Want more information or herbicide suggestions? Contact:

Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control

10905 N. Ramsey Road

Hayden, ID 83835

208-446-1290 / TTY 208-446-2145

kcnoxiousweeds@kcgov.us or www.kcweeds.com

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