✔ Lawn Care Practice Summary

✔ Assessment 1 – Spring Lawn Care (late April – June)

PRACTICE (Rate each practice by completing Assessments 1, 2 and 3)	1. LOW RISK recommended	2. MED. RISK Potential hazard	3. HIGH RISK Unsafe situation	YOUR RISK	NOTES
Fertilization Maintaining a healthy lawn requires proper fertility. Improper fertilizer use, however, can waste money and increase the likelihood of water contamination. A lawn-fertilizing schedule should be adjusted according to soil fertility, the health of the lawn and the owner's objectives. A low-maintenance lawn may require only one fertilizer application per year, while a high-quality lawn may require as many as five applications.	No fertilizer applied, or fertilizer applied based on soil test and owner's objectives.	Fertilizer applied before spring green-up. (Fertilization too early may increase the potential for nutrient loss to water resources.)			A lawn fertilization program that begins late summer/fall will delay the need for spring fertilization and promote a healthy lawn.
Mowing It is essential to mow a lawn at the correct height and frequency to maintain a healthy lawn. Many people mow their lawns too short, inviting weeds and other pests. Mowing should provide a uniform, pleasing appearance while improving the density of the grass plants by promoting the development of roots and leaves. High-density grass discourages weed invasion and the loss of fertilizers and pesticides.	Lawn mowed at 2.5-4" height. Mowed with a frequency to remove only 1/3 of the leaf blade each mowing.		Lawn mowed short (less than 2") and/or more than 1/3 of leaf blade removed.		Spring conditions may require mowing the lawn more than once a week.
Irrigation To maintain a high-quality lawn, irrigation is often required. When irrigation is done properly, the lawn can tolerate more pest damage without the use of pesticides than unirrigated lawns. When irrigation is done improperly, it increases the chance for surface and groundwater pollution and is a waste of money and water.					Lawn irrigation is usually not required at this time.
Pest control When pests invade lawns, consider tolerating the damage. If pest control is desired consider the full range of pest control options: cultural (including those listed above), biological, mechanical and chemical (pesticides). Use pesticides together with other control methods. Improperly applied pesticides may contaminate groundwater and surface water. For the latest lawn pest control recommendations, contact your county MSU Extension office.	Crabgrass managed by maintaining a healthy lawn.	Crabgrass preventer applied at correct time: forsythia bloom.			A vigorous lawn will shade out crabgrass.
	Broadleaf weeds managed by maintaining a healthy lawn, or herbicide(s) used to spot treat weeds.	Herbicide(s) used to treat entire lawn area.			Broadleaf weeds are best controlled with a fall herbicide application.
Seeding The best time to seed or repair a lawn is in the fall or spring, with mid-August to late September providing the most reliable results. Later seedings may fail if the seedlings have insufficient growth to survive the winter. A dormant seeding made in November is acceptable because low temperatures will prevent germination until the following spring. Summer seedings are often unsuccessful because of high temperatures, lack of moisture and competition from weeds. Runoff from areas of bare soil can be a major source of pollution in lakes and rivers.	New and weak lawn areas seeded in early spring.		Bare areas not seeded (or sodded) and subject to soil erosion.		Spring is an effective time to seed a lawn, although expect more weed competition than with a fall seeding.