

## Resurrecting a Lifeless Lawn

### *What We Can Do to Make Turf Look Like New*

At this point in the growing season, you may notice thinning turf or bare spots in your lawn and wonder what could be causing the trouble. There are plenty of possible reasons for problems like these, including:

- Compacted soil
- Excessive thatch
- Insect or disease damage
- Hot, dry weather



The good news is that your turf can be brought back to life again. Aside from proper mowing, fertilizing and watering, the following steps can make a world of difference:

### **CORE AERATION**

Compacted soil and excessive thatch can starve turf roots of the air, water and nutrients they need to grow deep and strong. Core aeration can help. With this process, we use a machine known as a core aerator to punch through turf and pull out plugs of soil and thatch, which are left behind to dissolve during rainfall or sprinkling. As the plugs dissolve, decomposition of the thatch layer is promoted. Plus, the holes created during aeration make it easier for air, water and nutrients to reach the roots.

### **OVERSEEDING (WITH CORE AERATION)**

This is a great way to thicken up thin turf areas, and we do it by broadcasting seed evenly over any spots that need to be filled in. Overseeding always works better when there's good seed-to-soil contact. If we core aerate before overseeding, the seed will have some soil to lodge in and germination rates will be improved.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- [\*Resurrecting a Lifeless Lawn\*](#)
- [\*Yellow Jackets? Yikes!\*](#)
- [\*Deck vs. Patio: Which is Right for Your Property?\*](#)
- [\*Make a Splash in Your Landscape with a Water Feature\*](#)

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## SLICE SEEDING

This is the most efficient way to seed a very thin or badly damaged lawn. A slice seeder (or slit seeder) makes vertical slits in the turf and deposits grass seed directly into the soil, all in one pass. This encourages high germination rates and thicker growth.

Late summer and fall are great times for renovation practices like these, since temperatures are milder and encourage new growth. In addition, new grass doesn't have as much weed competition once the growing season starts winding down.

If your lawn looks like it's struggling this summer, give Handy Andy Outdoors, LLC a call. We can help get it back on track again!

*[Back to top](#)*<sup>^</sup>

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## Yellow Jackets? Yikes!

Yellow jackets can take the fun out of outdoor gatherings in a hurry. They're attracted to food items containing sugars, proteins and carbohydrates. Sweet foods and meats are especially enticing to them, and you can often find them hovering around picnic areas and garbage cans where these types of foods have been left behind.



As yellow jacket populations build up in the late summer, simply using a lawn mower or string trimmer can grow risky due to the potential for disturbing an underground nest. These social insects will vigorously defend their nests if they feel threatened, and unlike bees, they're capable of stinging repeatedly.

### COMMON SENSE CONTROL

One way to decrease yellow jacket activity on your property is to make your outdoor living space less appealing to them. You can do this by:

- Making sure trash bins stay tightly covered.
- Promptly disposing of empty food and beverage containers, as well as used paper plates and plastic cups.
- Keeping any grilled meat and other foods properly wrapped up and out of sight when not in use.

### DESTROYING NESTS IS DANGEROUS

Yellow jackets are very aggressive, so it's usually best to leave their nests alone. Only the fertilized queen will survive through the winter, and she'll start a new nest in the spring in a different location. The rest of the yellow jackets will die off as cold weather sets in.

Sometimes, however, a nest's location makes it hazardous enough to warrant destruction. Though yellow jackets usually build their nests underground, nests can also be found under decks, in sheds, and even in the wall voids of homes. These types of nests can be destroyed with insecticides, which should be applied around dusk (when all of the pests are resting inside).

Due to the hostile nature of yellow jackets, you may want to consult a professional for safe and effective control options. Be careful out there!

# Deck vs. Patio: Which is Right for Your Property?

Carefully planned and installed, a deck or patio can greatly increase the value and enjoyment of your home by expanding your outdoor living space. The trick is to decide which one, and which construction materials, will fit in best with your current surroundings while meeting your goals for outdoor relaxation and entertaining.



## WHEN DECIDING BETWEEN A DECK OR PATIO, HERE ARE SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND:

**Capacity** - If you'll be entertaining lots of people, or if you need to hold something heavy like a hot tub, a patio makes a sturdier choice. While decks can be reinforced to hold extra weight, the reinforcements may compromise aesthetics.

**Terrain** - If you have a sloping yard, you may want to go with a deck. Though the ground can be built up to provide a level patio surface, this can cost extra.

**Weather** - How much sun, rain and snow does the site get? Too much sun can make patio surfaces unpleasant to walk on in bare feet, while rain and snow take their toll on deck materials.

## ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED ON A DECK OR PATIO, YOU'LL NEED TO CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

**Decks** - Synthetic decks made from recycled plastic are appealing due to their minimal maintenance requirements. Plus, they're less susceptible to insect damage, warping and splintering. Wooden decks, on the other hand, are less expensive and provide a more natural look. However, they do require periodic maintenance.

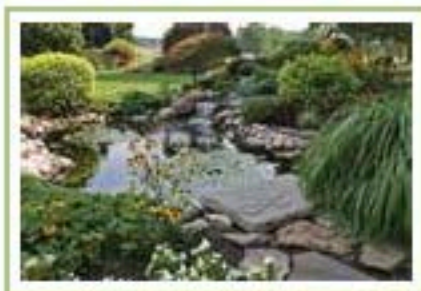
**Patios** - Pavers are a durable, low-maintenance choice for patio construction and come in a wide variety of styles and colors. Concrete is another option to consider, especially since the days of the dull, gray concrete slab are behind us. You might be surprised by the color and pattern choices available in concrete patios.

To learn more about decks and patios, or if you need help deciding on the best option for your property, call Handy Andy Outdoors, LLC today. We'll be happy to help!

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## Make a Splash in Your Landscape with a Water Feature

Every property can be improved with the addition of a water feature. Not only do they make great conversation pieces, but they can help to create a more tranquil setting in your landscape when you need a place to unwind.



Depending on the mood you're after, there are plenty of choices. Consider the following:

### PONDS

With numerous possibilities for adding plants and wildlife, ponds add a whole new level of interest to the landscape. These versatile water features can be simple or spectacular and come in all shapes and sizes. Keep in mind that if plants or wildlife are to be added, you'll need to consider the type of habitat they require.

### FOUNTAINS

Situated in a pond or self-contained, fountains can provide a simple spray of water or a complex pattern of dancing streams. You can choose from all sorts of designs, including tiered fountains, cascading fountains incorporating statuary, garden wall fountains and even simple pebble fountains.

### WATERFALLS

Moving water is pleasing to both the eye and the ear, and a waterfall can make your property much more relaxing. Preformed waterfalls are available, or customized versions can be constructed using liner fabric, rocks, concrete and a pump.

Remember...even something as basic as a birdbath can have a big impact. No matter how big or small your property or your budget, Handy Andy Outdoors, LLC can design and install a water feature that meets your needs and interests perfectly. Give us a call today for more information.

*[Back to top](#)*<sup>^</sup>



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