✔ Lawn Care Practice Summary

PRACTICE (Rate each practice by completing Assessments 1, 2 and 3)
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

✔ Assessment 2 – Summer Lawn Care (July – mid-August)

	1. LOW RISK recommended	2. MED. RISK Potential hazard	3. HIGH RISK Unsafe situation	YOUR RISK	NOTES
	No fertilizer applied, or fertilizer applied based on soil test and owner's objectives.		Fertilizer applied without regard to owner's objectives.		Non-irrigated lawns often require little fertilization during summers with little rainfall.
	Clippings returned to the lawn or composted.	Clippings removed from the lawn and not composted.	Clippings discharged into water bodies (including storm sewers).		Returning clippings to the lawn can reduce the total need for fertilizer.
	Sharp mower blade maintained.	Mower blade not sharpened for entire season.			A sharp blade will reduce damage to grass plants.
	Lawn not irrigated or light, frequent irrigation (.1 or .2") applied when needed.		Heavy (1" or more) infrequent lawn irrigation and/or irrigation during rainy periods.		Do not apply more than .5" of water after fertilizer and/or pesticide application.
	Weeds managed by maintaining a healthy lawn.	Herbicide(s) applied despite hot and dry weather.			Herbicides generally perform poorly during periods of slow weed growth.
	Insects and diseases managed by maintaining a healthy lawn.	Insect/disease identified. Pesticide applied according to label instructions.	Pesticide applied without pest identification and without regard to label instructions.		Many home lawns do not require the use of a lawn insecticide or fungicide.
					Lawn seeding is usually not recommended at this time.