**Common questions asked by residential landowners about Soil Quality Restoration**

**What time of the year should a soil quality restoration be completed?**

Soil Quality restoration for already established lawns, should take place in the spring time in March - May or in Fall September - November.

**Is soil quality restoration safe for pets and children?**

Soil Quality Restoration is a great alternative to traditional lawn care methods that may use fertilizers or other chemicals than can be harmful humans or pets after application. SQR uses natural compost which does not pose a threat to people and pets, and additionally this method does not harm other helpful insects within the soil profile.

**Where does the compost come from?**

Compost is made from organic matter that has been decomposed. Organic matter used in the composting process could include leaves, vegetable scraps, or other plant-based materials. Composting is a natural process of recycling organic material promoting soil microbes that aid in plant growth and provides nutrients in the soil and helps the soil to retain moisture. Local contractors in the Des Moines area usually source their compost from Metro Waste or make their own.

**How long will my lawn be covered in compost?**

After the soil quality restoration has been completed, it will take 1 to 2 weeks for the compost to fully settle into the soil profile. If it does not rain within a couple of days after application, a light watering will be needed. During this time, periodic raking of the compost will help the compost settle into the soil profile and will help the grass grow through the compost.

**Do I need to do anything before I have an SQR completed at my home?**

Before application, its advisable to mow the lawn as mowing may not be an option for several days after completion of the SQR. Additionally, knowing where irrigation or other important lines are located can help prevent problems. If grass seed will be applied with the SQR, do not use a crabgrass pre-emergence product in the spring as it may stunt the new grass growth.

**After aeration and the compost is applied, what maintenance is needed?**

Once soil quality application has been completed, landowners should periodically rake areas of compost to make sure the grass is growing through, especially in areas where the composts had a thicker application. If it does not rain within a couple of days of application, a light watering will be needed to help the compost settle into the soil profile. Once the compost has settled into the soil profile no special maintenance is needed.

**Is my irrigation or other cable and electrical lines at risk if I do an SQR?**

Some utility lines, such as dog fence, cable, and irrigation systems are installed near the surface and should be verified before completing soil quality restoration. Deep tine aerators may go as deep as 6 inches and could endanger shallow utilities.

**“My yard stays wet after it rains for extended periods of time” or “After it rains ponding occurs in my yard” Will soil quality restoration help my yard?**

Traditional turf grass typically only absorbs about a ¼ inch of water. Soil quality restoration increases the organic matter content which helps the soil become more sponge like helping the soil to absorb 1 inch or more of water during a rain fall.

Soil quality restoration helps absorb water where it lands. Better infiltration will help decrease the quantity of water running off the lawn helping to decrease the presence of small ponding areas. For areas where lots of water ponds or where there are large areas contributing to runoff, soil quality restoration in areas “uphill” and in the drainage area, or other management practices like rain gardens or bioswales may be needed.

In newer neighborhoods its very common to have highly compacted soils. In developments with high compaction and lack of topsoil, it is common for water to get trapped between the compacted soil and sod. The compacted soil traps water leaving lawns “wet and squishy” long after a rain event occurs. Stopping rain where it falls and improving the soil to better absorb the water should help with this problem.

**How frequently do I have this application completed?**

The benefits of soil quality restoration will last for years, by increasing soil organic matter. Soil quality restoration can be used as an alternative to other types of lawn care to improve soil health and to create a green healthy lawn while benefitting water quality. Many residents opt for a one time application of SQR while others have completed several.