



The Plant Professionals

Lawn Care

By DeAnna Baumgartner, February 2012

Mowing

- St. Augustine – every 7 days at 2-3"
- Bermuda – every 5-7 days during growing season maintaining a 1" height
Always start with a sharp blade (yearly, Jan. when mowing is at a minimum).
Raise mower setting during the hot and dry season (a higher setting reduces moisture loss and encourages deep root growth).

Fertilizing

- March & October with a slow release high nitrogen fertilizer (like our Gill Fertilizer). Determine the size of your area to assure the proper amount of material needed. ($L \times W = \text{sq ft.}$).
- Excess fertilization weakens roots, increases watering needs, causes thatch and excessive growth, and pollutes waterways.
- Water after applying fertilizers, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1", never wait for a rainstorm, in most cases the rain will fall too rapidly for the fertilizer to be absorbed & it will wash into the bay.
- Fertilize with an organic food to stimulate microbial activity, which breaks down thatch and plant debris into available nutrients.
- Soil test forms can be acquired through the local extension service or local garden centers to determine the exact needs of your lawn. Retest every 2-3 years.

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Watering

- Water when footprints across the lawn remain visible or when it is difficult to push a screwdriver into the lawn.
- Water deeply (6" penetration or deeper). Apply approximately 1" of water once a week.
- Water slowly enough to avoid runoff.
- To measure your sprinkler application, place an empty 6-ounce tuna can on your lawn. Stop watering when full.

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Mulching

Apply organic matter such as Back to Nature Natures Blend compost (1 bag per 25-50 square feet) or peat moss every 2 years. This reduces your watering needs and aerates soil to prevent compaction which prevents disease.

Tree trimming

Thin trees periodically to encourage sunlight to reach lawn area.

Fungus

Brown Patch and Take-All like cool night temperatures and plenty of moisture, and are active during fall and spring. Both diseases attack St. Augustine, Bermuda and Zoysia when they are under stress from

- Excess shade
- Compacted soil
- Poor drainage
- Overuse of herbicides
- Over fertilization
- Over watering (more damage on turf with shallow root systems).

Brown Patch

- Attacks the base of leaves
- At the outer edge of areas, leaf blade tips are tattered like split ends, curled and rusty brown. Middle of leaf is green but bottom is off color white and beginning to rot.
- Leaves separate easily and look and feel rotted at the base. Runner stays green but leaf blades are dying.
- Roots stay healthy.
- Occurs in circular patches, and center may recover as the fungus moves outwards.

Solution – Fertilome Systemic Fungicide, liquid or granule.

Take-all

- Runners somewhat green with segments unhealthy or dead.
- Runners pull up easily with minimum roots, similar to grub damage.
- Occurs in irregularly shaped patches.

Solution - Nature's Blend with Alfalfa & Humate. Apply 1 bag per 12-24 sq. ft. to stressed plants and lawns, or 1 bag per 25-50 sq. ft. to maintain healthy plants and lawn. Also peat moss can be used ¼ - ½ over area and watered in.

Disease control

- Aerate soil to prevent compaction.
- Fertilize moderately.
- Water deeply but not too frequently.
- Use herbicides carefully and sparingly.
- Monitor grass regularly.
- Provide good drainage.

Insects

Grub Worms

- Larval stage of June bugs
- Injures turf by feeding on the roots
- Damaged areas lose vigor and turn brown
- Severely damaged turf can be lifted by hand or rolled up like a carpet

Treatment: Finding more than 5 grubs per square feet justifies treatment. Beneficial nematodes should be applied in the cooler months (late fall to early spring), and only after 30 days of no application of pesticides.

Solution: Apply Bayer Season Long Grub Control the first of June for 3 month protection. Sept.-Oct. apply Bayer 24 hr. if new damage is evident.

Chinch Bugs

- Prefer hot, dry environments.
- Drought stressed lawns are more susceptible.
- Damage is due not just to the direct effects of chinch bug feeding but also to phytotoxic effects of the saliva.

Treatment: Proper watering and fertilizing. Thatch control. Use of resistant grass varieties.

Solution: A variety of liquid and granular insecticides are available to control. (Currently Triaziade liquid and granule)

Sod Webworms

- Larval or worm stage of lawn moths.
- Moths are most apparent in late evening.
- Prefer areas that are hot and dry during the day.
- Damage occurs as the larva chew off grass blades, appears as small brown patches of closely clipped grass.
- Areas may expand rapidly if control measures are not taken.

Solution: Insecticide may be applied in either a liquid or granular form. (currently Triazicide liquid or granule).

Scale

- Small flat insects that attach themselves to the leaf stem and form a protective covering.
- Damage appears as decrease of leaf blades and darkening of runners.

Solution: Liquid Insecticide will control the insects (currently Triazicide Liquid or Granule). Recovery of foliage is slow.

Weed control

Pre Emergent – before weeds emerge

Apply Amaze granules to established lawns and flowerbeds to prevent weed seeds from germinating. Water lightly.

Post Emergent – after weeds are up

Apply Wipeout granules to wet lawn and do not water for 24 hours, or use Weed B Gone spot weed killer for small areas in the lawn to kill weeds. Apply 1 tbl. Over 4 sq. ft. and water in to activate chemical.