

June 2009

Lawn Tips

- Prepare your lawn for the summer heat to come. Maintaining proper mower height is critical for a successful lawn and its survival through summer. Try not to remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade at each mowing. This can be difficult during rainy weather. After a wet period your grass may be excessively tall. In this case, mow your turf several inches higher than normal, then return several days later and mow at the proper height. An occasional mowing of tall grass is unavoidable, but routine close mowing will harm your lawn.
- Cut your cool season turf to a height of 3-4 inches. Mow zoysia grass and Bermuda grass to a height of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
- Grasscycling (leaving grass clippings on your lawn), eliminates bagging labor, reduces costs, adds organic matter and nitrogen to your soil, and does not contribute to thatch build-up. Grasscycling provides about 25% of the nitrogen your lawn needs to the year.
- Dull mower blades tear turfgrass and can lead to disease problems. White colored grass blade tips are an indication that the blade is dull.
- Remember to pick up and discard dog droppings from turf areas. The droppings will burn grass plants if left for an extended period of time.
- Established, cool season turf should only be fertilized in the fall. However, if you missed a fall application or if the turf is weak and thin it can be lightly fertilized as late as June with $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.
- June is a good time to fertilize zoysiagrass; apply 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. In either case, use a “low phosphorous” or “no phosphorous” fertilizer if your soil has an adequate phosphorous level. If needed, lime can be broadcast now according to soil test recommendations.
- Crabgrass has germinated. It is too late to apply a pre-emergent herbicide. Small patches of crabgrass can be controlled during the growing season by pulling it out by hand or applying a post-emergent herbicide as a spot treatment.
- Indian strawberry, clover, dandelion, wild onion, plantain, and other broadleaf weeds are growing at this time. They can be controlled now with spot treatments of a liquid broadleaf herbicide. Spot treatments with a ready to use (RTU) liquid herbicide are more effective and less environmentally harmful than spraying the entire lawn when not needed. Herbicides can damage or kill non-target plants. Do not spray herbicides around ponds or on breezy days and read and closely follow all label instructions. Fall herbicide applications often produce better control, especially for difficult to control weeds like wild garlic.
- Moss is usually associated with low sunlight, compacted soils and low soil pH. To return the area to turf, rake or dig out the moss, incorporate fertilizer and lime according to soil test recommendations and re-seed with tall fescue seed. It can often be difficult to establish fescue grass in mossy areas. If turf will not grow, consider re-planting the area with an appropriate groundcover that will tolerate moist, low-light conditions.
- Grub control products, halofenozide and imidicloprid, are best applied in July so as to avoid killing beneficial wasps that attack grubs. Follow all label instructions. These chemicals should only be used if you have at least 6-8 white grubs per square foot of soil and the grubs are killing your turf.
- Moles are very active this time of year. Traps are the most effective method of control. Using grub control products on your lawn will not control moles.

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- Dollar spot, brown patch and red thread may be observed on turf at this time. No fungicide sprays are recommended. Close mowing and excessive fertilization may pre-dispose turf to some leaf spot diseases. Spring fertilization as opposed to fall fertilization can also promote lawn diseases. Properly maintained tall fescue has disease resistance to most leaf spot diseases.

Have a pest or gardening question?

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