



HOME & GARDEN

Home and Garden information center • 12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 1-800-342-2507

September 2009

Lawn Tips

Culture

- Lawns typically turn brown and go dormant in late summer. This is a natural response that helps turfgrass survive drought. Grasses that go dormant should green-up and grow vigorously again in the fall. This year we had a little more rain than usual and most lawns look better than in previous summers. If you have spots where the grass has died, the soil becomes quite compacted and will need preparation before re-seeding.
- You can over-seed from late August through mid-October with a turf-type tall fescue cultivar at a rate of 4 lbs. of seed per 1,000-sq. ft. of area. Turf-type tall fescues are the recommended grasses for Maryland.
- This is also a good time to totally renovate a lawn if needed. When starting from scratch, apply the tall fescue seed at a rate of 8 - 10 lbs per 1,000 sq. ft. of area.
- Whether renovating or over-seeding, the seed bed should be raked vigorously with a metal rake to loosen the soil and promote good seed to soil contact. If your entire lawn is compacted, machine aerating will help improve seeding, water and fertilizer penetration. After seeding, the area should be lightly covered with straw and watered twice each day, even after the grass emerges. Fescue seed should germinate in about a week. Broadleaf weed killers can be applied after newly seeded grass has been mowed at least 3 times.

Weeds

- Severe crabgrass problems should be dealt with next spring through the use of pre-emergent herbicides. Over-seeding your lawn to thicken the turf will also help combat crabgrass.
- You can control broad leaf weeds like ground ivy, plantain, dandelion and clover by using a broadleaf herbicide containing 2,4-D and triclopyr. For best results be sure moisture levels are sufficient before applying herbicides. Winter annuals like henbit and chickweed can be controlled using a preemergent herbicide around the 3rd week in September. But remember, you cannot apply a preemergent and sow grass seed at the same time. This is the ideal time to control wild bermudagrass, nimblewill, and other narrow leaf, perennial weeds. Control weeds in your lawn with spot treatments of glyphosate herbicide at least a week prior to renovation.
- This is a good time to have your soil tested. Watch our new video on how to take a soil test.
- Cool season grasses, bluegrass and fescue should be fertilized in September, October and November with 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in September and October and ½ lb of nitrogen in November. The amount of lime to apply will be indicated by the soil test numbers. If it is necessary to apply lime, spread it after all fertilizer has been applied and before the ground freezes.

Insects

- Cicada killer wasps are very active now. They are large, 2 inches long, and resemble yellow jackets in coloration. Although they are capable of stinging, they will not bother you unless you actually grab one in your hand. These wasps prey on cicadas which they capture, paralyze with their sting, and carry back to their in-ground nests for their young to eat. They are solitary insects but may congregate in large numbers in your yard. No control measures are recommended.

**Have a pest or gardening question? Call the Home and Garden Information Center
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