



## LAWN CARE DURING THE SEASONS

**Fall-** This is the time to apply fertilizer to cool season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue, fine fescue, and perennial ryegrass. It allows the turf to develop a better root system and become dense. Other advantages include: better recovery from summertime diseases and other stresses, better color during winter, earlier green-up when spring rolls around. This is also a good time to do White Grub control. White grubs include Japanese Beetles and Masked Chafers. Treating them starting in August will get rid of them during the early development stages. Mid September – Mid November is a good time to do fall time weed control. Mid September – Mid October is a good time to do both seeding and renovation to your lawn.

**Winter-** Mid February is a good time to start sodding. Anytime during winter is probably a bad time to fertilize, because the ground is frozen so much it causes fertilizers, pesticides and other things like that to sit on top of the ground and not be absorbed, and then when there is rain or precipitation, it causes them to runoff and pollute the water sources nearest to your neighborhood. Mowing should not occur during winter, after about Mid December because the lawn is dormant and cutting it too short during times when it is not growing can cause damage that will show when it is in times of growth. Mid February – Mid March is also a good time to seed and renovate your lawn.

**Spring-** about Mid March is a good time to begin mowing. Here is a chart of some Kentucky grasses and the healthiest and most economic heights for them to be mowed at.

<u>Height (in inches)</u>	<u>Type of Grass</u>
1/2 – 1	Bermudagrass
3/4 - 1	Zoysiagrass
1 – 2	Perennial Ryegrass
2 – 2 1/2	Creeping Red Fescue
2 – 2 1/2	Tall Fescue
2- 2 1/2	Kentucky Bluegrass

Mid March – Mid May is a good time to do weed control. This is a good time to use any herbicides that you may want to use on your lawn.

**Summer**- Proper watering is important for your lawn from about Mid May – Mid September, the hottest months of the year. Also Mid May – Mid July is another good time to take care of pests in the White Grub family because it gets rid of them prior to the eggs hatching. The month of June is a good time to apply fertilizer to warm season grasses such as Bermuda grass and zoysia grass.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LAWN CARE**

**Fertilization:** It is important to remember that you should never add fertilizer without first testing the soil to make sure that it actually needs it. It is a good idea to test the soil every 3 or 4 years to make sure that the fertility is being maintained. Fertilizing in the spring and summer are a bad idea because it can increase the risk of several diseases and reduces tolerance of the turf to summer stresses and increase the need of more frequent mowing. Fertilizer should be applied to only the lawn. And there should not be more than 15 lbs. of actual Nitrogen/ 1000 sq. ft. of lawn at any time because it can cause leaf burn to the grass. It is a bad idea to apply fertilizer when heavy rain is expected because it will run off and contaminate nearby water sources. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn after mowing act as a natural fertilizer or using soil from a compost heap is another efficient and economic way to fertilize. High maintenance level lawns require more fertilization along with more frequent irrigation, mowing and pest control. Herbicides should be used with much caution because they tend to be toxic and can cause harm to pets, children and water sources that they may run off into.

**Mowing:** One should refer to the above mowing chart or use a height somewhere in the range of 2-3 in. And for low maintenance at least 3 inches. A good idea is to avoid cutting off more than 1/3 of the leaf blade. Letting grass have a height of at least 3 inches allows it to develop a deeper and strong root system. One should avoid mowing when the turf is under heat or drought stress.

**Watering:** You can over water your lawn. It is a good idea to water in the morning so that the water doesn't evaporate as quickly and so that it doesn't cause mold or rot on your lawn. You should water more deeply and not more frequently to get a better root system. Sprinklers shouldn't water sidewalks or driveways to prevent wasting of water. If your lawn is on a slope you should water at a slow rate to prevent excess runoff or

erosion of the soil. Another way to prevent erosion is to plant ground cover vegetation, use mulch or landscape fabric. Rain barrels are an efficient way to collect rain water and use it to water your lawn as opposed to using a sprinkler system or the water hose. Watering isn't necessary during the dormant season from November to February. Watering too frequently and not deep enough will encourage the weeds to grow and not the grass. But watering deeply will keep the grass moisturized on a hot day while the weeds will die because the grass roots are deep and the weed roots are more superficial. Deep watering should be done with deep soil, otherwise it will leach the nutrients from your soil instead of helping.

**Liming:** Lawns can be limed year round according to whether or not it is needed. This can be determined by a soil test. Lime is used to decrease the acidity to a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. An alternative to lime that lowers pH is sulfur. Turf grasses are not generally affected by pH but many landscaping plants are.

**Pest Control:** A great non-toxic way to take care of grubs and Japanese beetles (this can help get rid of moles also) is to use something called Milky Spore powder. It is a bacterium that kills the grubs, but does not harm beneficial insects, humans, pets or any water systems that may be nearby. It should be applied as one teaspoon on top of the grass in spots every four feet in rows four feet apart. After application water the lawn lightly to get the spores down in the soil. You shouldn't mow your lawn after application until a heavy rain occurs or you water it for at least 15 minutes with a hose.



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