

# TURF TIPS

The Turf Care Newsletter of Prestige Shrub and Tree, Ltd.®  
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## Payment Remittance and prepayments

Please be certain that you are using the correct address for remitting payments whether you address your own envelope or use your bank's electronic payment system. Also if you wish to prepay your account for the year you may do so by calling our office to set up payment.

P. O. Box 1509  
Duluth, GA 30096

Also, since your application cost may be different this year, please be sure to make the necessary adjustments to your online banking account.

## Update your contact information

Please be sure to update your contact information so we have the most current email and phone numbers on file. If you live in a gated community, please be sure we are on your guest list so we can have access to your property.

This is your first turf care visit for 2021. Remember you can check out our website by browsing:

[www.prestigestt.com](http://www.prestigestt.com)

With winters in Georgia, we can experience temperatures moving from unseasonably warm days flipping rapidly to extremely cold days. With this weather pattern turf often incurs damage especially in areas where it was previously stressed for any reason. Adequate and consistent winter rainfall will greatly mitigate any severe weather effects by main-

taining soil moisture. Moist soil retains warmth much more efficiently than dry soil and consequently turf root damage is reduced. Be sure to monitor your rainfall closely so you can fill in any dry spells we may experience with irrigation. Allowing turf or plants, especially new turf or plants, to dry out during the winter can lead to desiccation of its root zone and the turf or plants succumbing to freezing temperatures causing severe damage or death. Though we cannot stop excessive rain, we can supplement with irrigation during dry conditions and should do so even in winter.

In this first winter visit, we will be applying potassium, phosphorous, pre-emergent and post-emergent weed control to both the warm season and fescue turf. Our turf program is based on proven technology and research. We constantly look for new formulations and products to give us more uniform release of the nitrogen and also less nitrogen loss to volatilization. The fescue turf in most of our service areas have already received a long term slow release fertilizer at round 6 of 2020 that will slowly feed the fescue until late spring. Application of this long term fertilizer will minimize any color drop off over winter by supplying a more stable nitrogen source. Bermuda turf will receive its green up fertilizer on our second application to aid the turf as it begins to break its winter semi-dormancy. Zoysia turfs will be fertilized at round 3 as it requires less nitrogen input than Bermuda turf does..

## Winter Care For Warm Season Turf

Every year as we move through the winter into spring, we expect to see disease activity in the warm season turf including Fairy Ring, winter patch and other spring diseases. A spring application of fungicide will stop the disease and encourage the turf to recover. A service call between visits for disease treatment will be at additional cost, due to the cost of the fungicides required if you are on our basic program As always, if we find active disease in your turf while on your property, spot treatment of the affected areas is included in your lawn application. Some situations may require full fungicide applications and your applicator can give you a quote for adding our spring fungicide application to your program for enhanced protection. If you find areas of possible disease in your turf, you can always email us a picture for proper ID and we can give you a quote on adding a spring fungicide application to your existing program.

The warm season turfs received a fall application of weed control and will again receive weed controls in the first two applications of the new year to address any weeds that may have survived through the winter time. While Prestige provides the necessary nutrients, you need only provide water until spring green up when it is time to scalp and aerate your Bermuda turf. A full scalp down is NOT recommended on Zoysia turf but some Zoysia lawns may benefit from spring aeration and dethatching.

If you have used our aeration services within the past two years, you will receive your aeration letter in late February. If you want a quote for aeration, please contact our office and we will provide you with an aeration letter. **You must call and ask for our aeration service by the deadline on your letter to be put on our schedule. Prestige does not offer dethatching services; please refer to your maintenance company for this service.**

Topdressing warm season lawns is another practice we see in early spring. It is important that only a thin layer of sand be used (only 1/8-1/4") to facilitate air and water movement but not to create compaction problems. Refer to University of Georgia's recommendations as to how to top dress your turf correctly and avoid creating the compaction, weed and disease problems that can be inherent in excessively top dressed lawns.

## Fescue Report

As we move through winter, there is nutrient uptake during cold weather and short winter days, but the nitrogen in the fertilizer is not utilized as efficiently by photosynthesis. This means you usually will not see the deep green color until day length increases and we get consistently warmer weather, consistently warmer soil temperatures, and consistent rainfall or irrigation. These are the factors that not only continue to move the fertilizer into the root zone, but also increase the uptake of the nutrients by the roots into the plant tissues. The simple fact that fertilizer was applied to the soil is only one small part of the process.

Fescue growth also slows during winter. Fescue builds root systems and stores carbohydrates (energy) over winter when soil and air temperatures allow, but even fescue slows its growth when temperatures are cold. Its root system and cells are actually growing and functioning but as

with green up, you will see very little, if any, **visible top growth** until we get the crucial factors of consistently warmer weather, consistently warmer soil temperatures, increased day length and consistent rainfall or irrigation. After successive days of very cold weather, the fescue will appear very thin and off color but will begin to darken as soil temperatures rise. Other than monitoring your winter rainfall and addressing the possible need for supplemental irrigation when the temperatures allow, your turf will over-winter with only a little help from you and will begin to grow rapidly as we move into April.

Each year we expect to see weeds in the fescue turf. This is normal due to the lack of a fall pre-emergent herbicide. **No pre-emergent can be applied to the fescue turf in the fall since doing so would prevent the seeds from germinating during aeration and overseeding time.** What weeds the winter freezes do not kill, the first two applications of the new year will address.

## Poa Annua Control

Many of you with warm season yards may notice a clumpy light green weed with white seed heads growing during winter time in various spots in your turf. This weed is Poa Annua or annual bluegrass. While improved varieties are actually used on northern golf courses, down here in the south it is an annual winter time visitor that sticks out like a sore thumb. Weaker areas of turf under trees and in areas where water drains are areas most likely to be populated with this weed. Poa annua prefers growing in areas with compacted soil though we have found it in all types of soil densities. Poa is worse in years in which we have excessive fall and winter rainfall, as was the case this winter. The rainfall can deplete the pre-emergent barrier faster, especially in areas of poor drainage or areas prone to runoff, allowing this tenacious weed to grow more aggressively in the spring.

Controlling the poa is a yearly challenge to say the least. Like most weeds, our battle starts before the first weed seeds germinate. Your Round 6 pre-emergent application on the warm season lawns sets up a barrier to help prevent poa from growing in. Fescue turf does not get pre-emergent in the fall due to the aeration and seeding and is not compatible with Specticle herbicide. Therefore, keeping your fescue seeded each fall and mowing your turf at 3-4" when it is growing to keep it healthy can reduce poa in fescue lawns. Bagging the grass clippings while the poa is present can reduce seeds in the turf. For the most part, Specticle does a great job in preventing most of the poa from germinating in your warm season turf. At rounds 1-3, we spot treat the poa that has grown in over the fall and winter. Although the poa in your turf has been treated, you should not expect to see immediate results as our treatments quite often require warmer air temperatures of at least 60-70 degrees to absorb into leaves to begin to work. Full die off of treated poa plants should not be expected before late spring when temperatures are consistently in the 80's. Aerating your bermuda turf at least one time per year will help manage compaction and reduce poa growth. Unfortunately, even doing everything right sometimes doesn't always translate into a poa free yard. Areas of poor drainage and/or weak areas of turf will always yield poa to some degree and some yards just germinate poa each year and will require more post emergent treatments than others no matter what mitigating steps have been taken.