

# TURF TIPS

The Turf Care Newsletter of Prestige Shrub and Tree, Ltd.®  
www.prestigestt.com 770-476-7781

- Almost Time For Fescue Aeration and Seeding
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## **\*\*NEW PAYMENT OPTION\*\***

**We now have a payment option on our website that will allow customers to make payments to their account. This option is to allow clients to pay single invoices at their own convenience. Please call in to set up automatic bill pay or to pay for a whole year of service in advance. Check it out at Prestigestt.com!!**

This is your fifth scheduled turf care visit for the year. The weather has been mild through the first part of the summer. Our spring was relatively cool which caused some delay in turf green up. Our rains have so far been consistently providing adequate moisture for good turf growth. As of the end of June, we have received 26.35" so we are on track for a closer to normal rainfall year of 49". Much of the early summer has been mild though now as we move into July, we have seen a more normal weather pattern and our temperatures and humidity have moved up into the more normal range of upper 80's to low 90's. As we get hotter, our rainfall may decline allowing the turf to reach a critical dry point causing hotspots. Most of the hotspots are mistaken for disease but upon further investigation are critically dry areas due to frequent light watering instead of the infrequent heavy watering schedule we recommend.

In this application, cool and warm season turf will be receiving weed control as temperatures permit. We will be especially aggressive treating weeds in the fescue turf as a preparation for fall aeration and seeding. You may see a temporary yellowing of the turf around treated areas, though this will grow out shortly after treatment. A one inch rainfall or your regular **once a week one inch watering** will be appropriate for adequate hydration. Remember, maintaining correct mowing heights, mowing frequency and a correct watering regimen will prevent drought stress and reduce disease in your turf.

**Letters will go out to those of you who have recently used Prestige for aeration and seeding. If you do not receive a letter and wish a quote please call or e-mail our office by August 31. Aeration and seeding requests must be made by September 3<sup>rd</sup> [accounting@prestigestt.com](mailto:accounting@prestigestt.com)**

## **Almost Time For Fescue Aeration And Seeding**

Though the fescue turf always moves into the summer lush and thick, it is a given that by the end of summer the heat and disease will have thinned the turf to the point that reseeding is required. This is the case this year and every year.

**Fall** is the best time for aeration and seeding. Once you miss the fall window of opportunity, you cannot successfully seed in the spring to try to replenish the stand. The bottom line: skipping the fall aeration and seeding means you will have even thinner turf all of next year. Thin

turf does not compete well with weeds, hence you will have an unmanageable weed load.

If you do your own aerating and seeding, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Use quality, hybrid turf type tall fescue. Use seed with at least 85% germination and a purity rate of at least 90%. These are the minimum percentages that one should accept.
- The rate for over-seeding existing fescue lawns is 5-8 #s per thousand square feet. Thicker turf uses the lower rate, thinner turf requires the higher rate. Bare areas require 10#s per thousand square feet.
- It is best to get the aerating and seeding done prior to late October for best germination and establishment.
- Make your maintenance company aware of your seeding job. **DO NOT MOW UNTIL THE SEEDLINGS ARE AT LEAST 3" TALL.** Then maintain at a height of 3". If the turf is not growing then DON'T MOW. Don't mow just to pick up fall leaves; blow instead! Needless mowing only creates compaction and wears out the new seedlings leaving you with less turf and possibly patchy results.

**If you wish Prestige to provide your aerating and seeding then you must request the service each year.**

**We do not assume or know you want this service unless you call.** You should receive your reminder letter in August. Unfortunately, since our primary mission is chemical application, we cannot accommodate special scheduling requests. We call the week before to let you know which week we will be out to give you time to prepare the fescue and mark your irrigation. If you need

more specific scheduling we can refer you to a maintenance company that may be able to help you.

**REQUESTS MADE AFTER SEPTEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> WILL INCLUDE A \$25 SERVICE FEE AND NO REQUESTS MADE AFTER OCTOBER 4<sup>th</sup> WILL BE CONSIDERED.**

Prestige will start seeding operations, weather permitting, the week after Labor Day. While we do try to work around times of excessive heat, we cannot wait for fall weather to start our aeration and seeding jobs. We expect to end our aeration and seeding by mid to late October when the cool weather slows the germination and increases the likelihood the seed will simply rot. We suggest that you target your own seeding operation for the same period.

### Mowing Guidelines

- Mow weekly or more often to avoid firing (I am on a 4 day schedule).
- If brown streaks appear after you mow then you are getting **firing**. Firing appears in warm season turf after mowing too closely or removing more than one-third of the leaf blade. \*Firing is not disease related.
- As with all turf, be sure to maintain a **sharp blade** on your mower and keep the engine speed high.
- Rotary mower mowing height for warm season turf should be between 2" and 2 1/2" and fescue turf should be kept at 3-4" to avoid summer burnout and stress.
- Properly maintaining your turf also means allowing your turf to grow out longer in the late summer and early fall to encourage your turf's root system to store enough sugars to fuel green up the following spring while minimizing incidences of early spring disease that attacks weak turf. Any reel mowed turf should be switched to rotary mowing in late August to help it recover from the short frequent mowings throughout the summer.

### Summer Disease Update

Summer disease has actually been fairly mild through the first half of summer. We continue to spot apply fungicides where needed to help stop brown patch in fescue turf and dollar spot in the warm season lawns. By improving our program to apply slow release nitrogen at rounds 2 and 4, we have reduced the amount of disease in the bermuda turfs. Keep in mind, areas of disease may take a while to recover since our fungicides only stop the disease activity; they do not cure it. The circles and spots in the turf have to grow out and be mowed off for these areas to disappear.

While we cannot control mother nature, there are some things we can do to help prevent summer diseases in our turf. Watering before dew fall or in the morning when the turf should be drying should be avoided because it extends the hours of leaf wetness and contributes to conditions favorable to the formation and spread of disease. Warm season turf can develop dollar spot and pythium under these conditions while fescue develops brown patch. Our fungicides cannot always overcome increasingly heavy disease pressure.

Hotspots in the turf are not disease related, but are related to compacted areas in your lawn which have become severely dry during high temperature and low rainfall periods. If you see this problem, you can speed turf recovery by flooding the area with water to re-hydrate the soil. You can also use moisture manager products such as Ecosential or Cistern. These products work by pulling water into themselves creating moisture around the root system of the turf. I use this product on my turf to make the most of the rain since I have no in ground irrigation system. Ironically you must water these products into the soil.

As you can see, properly watering your turf can help reduce summer time diseases in all turfs. Of course daytime summer rains can interfere,

but by using the over night dew as a time to water you are doing the best you can to minimize favorable disease conditions while reducing drought stress.

### Maintenance Days

As we move through the summer time, it is important to note we do our best to avoid arriving to do your turf care on the same day your maintenance company shows up to mow your turf. This active avoidance ensures the quality of your application and that it will deliver the best results for your turf. There are many applications we apply to your turf that are not degraded by mowing, but we operate out of caution by trying to avoid maintenance days.

We do our best to track maintenance days on each of our lawn care customers, but it is impossible for us to keep track of the ever changing schedule of days for each of our customers and the myriad of different maintenance companies providing services on our accounts. If your maintenance day changes, please call our office so we can update this information. \*\*Because of how route work is done, we are only able to recognize 1 day of the week for maintenance. If your maintenance day is not set or utilizes 2 or more days of the week, we will only be able to work around 1 of these days. We respectfully ask that if we come on one of these days, that your maintenance company adjust their plans to allow for 1 day rest for the turf. Also note: we cannot simply reapply an application after maintenance crews mow over our application. There is no way to determine how much or little of an application still exists and reapplication can lead to turf damage from over treatment. Please inform your maintenance companies to respect our chemical application signs that are all dated and to give our application 1 day rest before mowing.