

TURF TIPS

The Turf Care Newsletter of Prestige Shrub and Tree, Ltd.®
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- Aeration in Bermuda and Zoysia
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COMING SOON:

Prestige will be utilizing RealGreen computer software to streamline our office and become a fully digital operation. As a part of this effort, we will be moving to become paperless. Please call our office or send your email to accounting@prestigestt.com to put an email on file.

This is your fourth scheduled turf care visit for the year. On fescue turfs, we will be applying your systemic fungicide and addressing weeds as temperatures allow. Bermuda lawns will be given more fertilizer designed to feed the turf until dormancy in the fall. Zoysia turf was given their season long fertilizer at round 3 that is designed to provide important nutrients evenly through until fall. All warm season turfs will be spot treated as needed for disease and, as temperatures allow, any weeds present in the turf.

Aeration in Bermuda and Zoysia

Spring is not the only time you can benefit from aeration!! Prestige offers aeration service during the summer to help reduce compaction and improve nutrient and water uptake in the root system. This service is especially important if you have not taken advantage of aeration service in the spring. Call our office to see if your lawn qualifies for our aeration service.

Weekly Mowing and Weed Control Work Hand In Hand!

Last round we saw many lawns that were late in getting in their initial lawn mowing. This late mowing start, along with cool spring temperatures encouraged weeds like poa and fireweed to linger through May. **Weed control products cannot control these weeds**

on their own. They must be combined with frequent mowings to do their best. As summer approaches and high temperatures develop, weed control will be limited to spot treatment of nutgrass, ground ivy and doveweed. Weed controls can temporarily burn the turf if it is too hot. Most weed control products are severely limited or even outright eliminated when temperatures are above 85-90 degrees.

*****A new product has come on the market for season long nutsedge control. Call our office for information and pricing on a Vexis application!*****

This is where your **weekly mowing** and dethatching (if necessary) comes into play. **You must mow weekly to control all weeds.** Just because you have had pre-emergent and post-emergent weed controls applied does not necessarily mean you will be weed free. Some weeds, such as tree seedlings, dove weed, ground ivy, fireweed and spurge, are not prevented by the pre-emergent weed control. Post emergent herbicides only damage tree saplings and only moderately affect the fireweed, while the other weeds are very resistant to weed control. Again, weekly mowing is the key to weed control along with the post emergent chemicals.

Watering

Water one time per week to get 1" of irrigation. Above 95 degrees water twice per week delivering a full inch of water at each watering.

Moving into the heat of the summer, our turf lawns need more and more water to stay hydrated. Many

times we see irrigation running at inappropriate times or see the evidence of a mismanaged irrigation schedule such as hot spots in the turf or saturated areas of over irrigation. Your main goal when providing water to your turf is to supplement natural rainfall with irrigation so the turf gets its weekly allotment of water needed to maintain growth and plant vigor. Ideally, we would like to see it rain 1 time per week applying 1" of water preferably at night between 10pm and 5am. Unfortunately, we don't have control over the rainfall schedule, but this schedule is what we hope to mimic.

Plant systems are designed to pull up moisture from the soil to aid in photosynthesis and plant growth and are at their most efficient as they utilize this moisture almost to the point of drought stress. In most cases with no rain, this happens to take roughly a week. After this point, the plant starts dehydrating and going into stress from lack of moisture. As the plant starts heading into drought stress it is ready for you to turn on your irrigation and re-hydrate the soil. This is called "watering on demand." Many times we see systems that are set for 3-4 days a week for 15-20 minutes per day. This schedule never allows the water or roots to progress deep into the soil. In our heavy clay soils, it takes at least this long to begin to see the water soaking into the soil. A heavy irrigation of 1" will help work the water deeper into the soil. Your goal here is for the water to seep 4-6" deep into the soil, if you can. Deeper irrigation allows the turf's roots to follow the water down into the soil protecting them from summer heat, excessive

wear, and the disease problems caused by weak turf.

Lastly, it is important to adjust the timing of your irrigation to water between 10pm-5am (roughly dew fall). By watering at night you can avoid a heavy loss from evaporation during the day and reduce the hours of leaf wetness thereby minimizing disease (especially in fescue turf). Of course, mother nature quite often throws monkey wrenches into our best laid plans by not cooperating, but this is the blueprint and a starting point to follow and fine tune the irrigation of your turf. Be sure to use your rain gauge as a guide to have an accurate account of your rainfall. Some areas may need more or less depending on other factors, but this watering plan will help keep everything hydrated.

Summer Turf Disease

Dollar spot always occurs in warm season turf during the summer especially in turf that is stressed due to **compaction, improper watering, or reel mowing**. In lawns that are properly maintained, dollar spot is much less of a problem but can still be an issue.

Our basic program for warm season turf includes fungicide treatments for dollar spot **during your regular visit** but if the fungus reoccurs between visits or if you have recurring diseases such as winter patch, zoysia patch or brown patch, treatment for these diseases is at additional cost.

For fescue, our basic program includes a systemic fungicide at the beginning of the brown patch season and we spot treat for disease during your regular summer visit. Depending upon the weather and the level of disease activity, additional fungicide may be required between your regular visits.

For those who want additional disease protection, we also have an enhanced fescue program and a warm season program which includes additional fungicide and is very effective at reducing zoysia patch, winter patch and brown patch activity. Your applicator can

quote you on the cost for the enhanced program and if you are within our service area for these enhanced programs.

Armyworms and Spittle Bugs

As many of you will remember, Armyworm activity was rampant in pretty much all areas of town only a few years ago. These voracious eaters ate their way through many lawns across the Atlanta area in both fescue and bermuda lawns. It is not guaranteed that this season will include these pests and impossible to predict.

Armyworms are the larvae of the white-neck moth or army worm moth. The moths fly from Florida into our area to lay their eggs and can stop anywhere. Last year, they flew to areas all the way up the east coast due to strong winds in late summer. Once they have hatched, the worms drop into the turf where they feed on the leaves of the turf grass rapidly devouring large areas of turf. Armyworms may be active anytime August through October so be aware your turf could become infested any time in late summer through early fall. Knowing how to spot them can prevent a lot of damage.

Armyworms feed by chewing off the turf leaves in fescue and bermuda lawns although they seem to altogether avoid zoysia; we have actually seen them go around zoysia areas growing amid the fescue! The turf will look like it has been cut down with a weed eater with a lot of dead grass leaves chewed off. If you see something like this, go to the edge of the spot and pour soapy water in the area. The soap will aggravate the worms and within a few minutes they will come to the surface. Armyworms can eat an entire lawn within days. **Fortunately, since the worms only chew off the leaves and leave the crown, the turf usually grows back if it was being kept healthy and hydrated before the attack.**

Spittle bugs are mainly a Zoysia pest for us in Metro Atlanta. These insects feed on the base of the blade

of turf by sucking the juices from the grass blade. Since they do not clip off the blade, they cause the turf to turn brown mimicking drought conditions. You can check for this pest by simply walking through your lawn. These pests will eagerly jump out of your way. Spraying water on questionable areas can also flush them out. Two lined spittle bug is the main culprit here. These bugs are roughly the size of your pinky nail, black in color, and have two red parallel lines bisecting their back.

Because of the fact that all turf areas must be treated when Armyworms or Spittle bugs are present, we must charge extra for this application. If treatment is desired, an additional application will be scheduled to be completed as soon as possible. Of course, any home garden center will have the appropriate insecticide Bifenthrin to help immediately kill any worms or spittle bugs active in the turf area. Many times you may find these chemicals packaged in an easy to operate hose-end sprayer for a convenient no measure application. Prestige also offers spring Acelepryn applications at an additional cost to help protect turf from army worm, spittle bug and grub activity. Call our office if you are interested in a quote. It is important to remember that applications of chemicals and fertilizer alone cannot correct growth and disease issues if proper cultural techniques are not being utilized.