

# TURF TIPS

The Turf Care Newsletter of Prestige Shrub and Tree, Ltd.®  
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- New Payment Method
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## ***COMING SOON:***

**Prestige will be utilizing Real Green 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. If you have not done so already, please call our office or send your email to [ac-counting@prestigestt.com](mailto:ac-counting@prestigestt.com) to put an email on file.**

This is your sixth scheduled turf care visit for the year. Fescue lawns will be receiving a slow release fertilizer to carry it through the winter and into the spring.

**Please note that no pre-emergent herbicide will be used on the fescue until LWN-1 of next year as the pre-emergent herbicides would adversely affect the seedlings that have germinated after your aerating and seeding. Fescue lawns can develop quite a few weeds before we are able to apply weed controls at round 1. Warm season lawns will either receive lime (depending on soil pH) or its fall pre-emergent weed control mix depending on the date. October 1<sup>st</sup> is our target date to start applying your pre-emergent weed controls to your warm season turf. We will continue until all of our warm season turf has been treated. Once we have treated all the warm season turf with the fall pre-emergent weed control mix, we**

will utilize the last round to finish applying lime for pH maintenance.

Now onto the weather! The weather so far this summer has been turning out to be quite hot as we progress through August. We have already seen many days and full weeks when the temperature is above 90 degrees and the rainfall has become sporadic providing a lot of rain in some areas and nothing in others. This type of feast or famine weather pattern is the perfect example of why irrigation needs to be set on manual instead of auto so it can be used when the rains taper off and as mentioned earlier, should be run overnight to reduce evaporation and disease potential. It is important to remember that once the rain stops, the soil immediately starts drying out. Since we do not have a water table here in Atlanta it only takes a week or so with summer temperatures to dry our soils even with the heavy downpours. Rainfall does not accumulate in the soil. If we go back to hot temperatures consistently in the 90's and dry conditions, you may see hot spots form in your turf. These areas are not getting enough water even though you may be watering each week. You may need to run that zone longer or you may need to physically determine that the head actually comes on and is irrigating properly by turning on that zone and standing on the hot spot; if you

are not getting wet, neither is the turf! So stay alert and ready to provide irrigation as it is needed to avoid hotspots in the turf. Also keep in mind that just because we are heading for fall and cooler weather, the turf still needs the water!

## **Raise Your Warm Season Turf Mowing Height!**

For all of you with bermuda and zoysia, you should have begun to raise your mowing height by August 15 until you effect a height of 2.5-3" by October. By allowing the turf to grow longer, the turf root systems to grow longer and begin preparation for the winter. Healthier and longer root systems provide energy for next year's spring green up by providing more capacity for the turf to store needed nutrients for winter and provide protection from winter kill and spring time diseases.

It is critical for those of you with reel mowed bermuda or zoysia to raise your mowing height. Reel mowed home lawns are under a lot of stress due to the shallow root systems that are the result of high compaction levels (all that sand topdressing and the weight of the reel mower being used twice per week).

Turf that is not allowed to recover and increase its root system depth is more susceptible to winter kill, winter patch disease, fairy ring, spring dead spot and dollar spot. Everyone needs to under-

stand we can not fix the disease problem with fungicide applications because that approach is rapidly becoming less effective each and every year. Fungicides, even for those willing to pay the extra cost, are not designed to fix a cultural problem and will never effectively control the problem. We need to save our fungicide use for where it will truly be effective against diseases that do not respond to changes in cultural practices or we will lose the effectiveness against all problems. This is no different than the overuse of antibiotics and we need to be proactive.

### Fescue Tips

Your fescue (cool season) turf will soon begin to recover from the summer heat.

**Do not mow the new fescue seedlings until they are 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 autumn leaves; gently blow instead! Many maintenance companies feel the need to mow each week. Needless mowing after seeding unnecessarily harms the young seedlings.

We expect to end our aeration and seeding by the middle of October. The cooler weather encountered as we move deeper into October, slows the germination and increases the likelihood the seed will simply rot. We suggest that you target your own seeding operation for the same optimal period.

### Turf Pests

At the risk of jinxing our luck, we have not had much in the way of turf pests to deal with. This is in stark contrast to years past when we experienced ample populations of all three of these pests.

In past years, Armyworm activity was rampant in some areas of

town, feeding mainly on the fescue. These worms are the larvae of the white-neck moth or army worm moth. Armyworms may be active anytime from 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 blades in fescue and bermuda lawns although they seem to altogether avoid zoysia. The turf will look like it has been cut down with a weed eater with a lot of dead grass leaves chewed off. Fortunately, since the worms only chew off 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. Two lined spittle bug is the main culprit here and are roughly the size of your pinky nail, black in color, and have two red parallel lines bisecting their back. They will feed on the base of the turf sucking the plants' juices out of the leaves. This causes the turf to look brown and dehydrated. While spittle bugs can attack most warm season turf, they only do damage to zoysia turf (excluding Zeon and Emerald turf types). Look for these pests when the weather has been hot and dry. Simply walking through the lawn will uncover the existence of these pests as they jump when disturbed.

Lastly, grubs will feed on the roots of the plants resulting in turf that can be pulled up easily like carpet. Having moles in your yard is not an indicator you have a grub problem. If you suddenly see large brown areas in the turf,

first check for dryness. Dig around the edge of the damaged areas and if you have grubs in the area, they will be focused around the edges eating the roots of the still healthy turf. You should be able to see them in the soil just under the turf.

If you find you have any of these pests and wish for Prestige to treat your property, call our office for a quote on the cost of a treatment. Prestige also offers a preventative treatment done in the spring to prevent all three of these pests and can be quoted as an additional service.

Lastly, we want to draw your attention to a couple things that would help us do our job more effectively and help you get the most of your investment with Prestige. First, for those who live in gated communities or have gates on property, please take a minute to check to be sure we are on your permanent guest list or make sure we have the correct gate code to access your property. Most of the time this is not an issue though we have been running into problems accessing accounts because our name has been removed from the security list even on properties we have been servicing for years. If we do not have an access code to your property, please consider putting it on file with us as many times we find clients are unable to open their gates when we arrive causing us to reschedule the application. We operate on a tight schedule and already have to consider everyone's maintenance days so rescheduling an application due to a locked gate may not always be possible.