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LAWN CARE CALENDAR FOR NORTHEASTERN OHIO

This month by month lawn care calendar is designed to help you understand lawn care and organize information so that you can confidently maintain your lawn. Alternatively, it gives you information to deal with a lawn care service and evaluate the treatment options they offer. Information listed is provided for all lawn care practices you will likely undertake as a homeowner. Extension fact sheets and bulletins that give more information are listed on the last page. These publications may be obtained from your local county Extension office or from the website.

Of course, not all items listed will pertain to your lawn care situation. However, items are listed by the month(s) when maintenance is usually performed or pests are more likely to be a problem. It is helpful to remember as you work in the world of lawn management that a lawn is a unique and dynamic biological system. The soil type and condition, weather, site orientation of your lawn, and the genetics of the grass population are factors that merit awareness and appreciation when setting your level of expectations.

Timing is given for a "normal" season and is geared for northern Ohio. For example, if spring temperatures are abnormally high or low, then the schedule for insect and weed control must be adjusted. Moisture, either an excess or deficiency, will also alter the schedule somewhat. Remember that the lawn is a *dynamic system*, so maintenance you choose to provide and the inherent conditions of the site are interrelated and affect lawn quality.

When pesticides are recommended, be sure to **read and follow all label directions** for proper use and precautions. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. If any information in these listings or recommendations disagrees with the label, the recommendations must be disregarded. No endorsement is intended for products mentioned, nor is criticism meant for products not mentioned. Some chemicals mentioned may be restricted to commercial applicators only.

March

Lawn Clean Up

Remove sticks, leaves, and debris from the lawn. A one-time early spring mowing at a lower cutting height can be used to remove dead grass blades and encourage spring green-up.

Seeding, Overseeding

Sow seed as soon as soil is workable. Seed must make soil contact for successful establishment. Seeding may be carried over into early April, if

necessary. Be sure there is adequate moisture in the soil to promote good germination. New seedlings need to be watered frequently to prevent them from drying out, especially if the seeds start to germinate. Keep new seedlings moist, not soaking wet.

Core Cultivation (Aeration)

Core cultivation can be done in spring when soil is moist, so that the operation pulls adequate soil cores, at least 2"-3" in length. However, weed seed brought to the surface during the process may germinate and cause a weed

infestation. Fall is perhaps the better season to aerate.

Wild Onion and Wild Garlic Control

Early spring control is best using 2,4-D ester formulation (this may be difficult to locate). Control may be fair. Be sure to apply these products before plants start to grow in the spring.

Winter/Early Spring Lawn Diseases

Potential diseases are pink snow mold, gray snow mold, leaf spot, red thread, fairy ring, necrotic ring spot, and yellow patch. Refer to Fact Sheets listed at the end of this guide.

April/May

Fertilization

If late fall fertilizer was applied last October or November, then make only **one** fertilizer application this spring, preferably in late April or early May, using no more than 3/4# actual N per 1000 square feet. Generally, a 3-1-2 ratio is recommended for Ohio lawns with 35-50% of the nitrogen being in slow release form.

If a late fall fertilizer was **not** applied, then make two applications this spring: one about April 1, the other May 25, using 1/2# actual N per 1000 square feet each time (1/2# of N per 1000 ft² is equal to 1.5# of a 30-5-10 fertilizer per 1000 ft²).

If your plan is to fertilize your yard only once a year, delay your fertilization until late fall. See October recommendation.

Mowing

Bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and the fine fescues should be mowed at a height of 2" to 2 1/2"; tall fescue is mowed at 2 1/2" - 3". Mow often enough so that no more than one-third of the grass blade is removed at any one cutting. Make sure the mower blade is sharp for clean cuts. Remember, leave grass clippings on the lawn. Grass clippings return nutrients to the soil and DO NOT contribute to thatch build up.

Irrigation

It may be necessary to water the lawn if the spring season is dry. Water deeply once a week early in the morning if possible, applying 1" of water slowly to wet the soil to a depth of 6-8 inches, if rainfall is insufficient. Check soil with a trowel to see if soil is wet to a 6" depth. You can also measure this by placing cans out until they fill to a depth of 1".

Lawn Insect Control

White grubs resume their activity as the soil warms in the spring. These grubs, however, are large and fairly resistant to insecticidal treatment and they do not feed heavily in the spring. Should a spring treatment be necessary, use trichlorofon (i.e. Dylox or Proxol) but expect only a 40-50% kill. Contact insecticides like these are best applied in late August to early September when the grub is small. These products must be watered in to become effective. It is best to have a commercial company apply an insecticide.

Watch for populations of these insects and manage them as needed:

Bluegrass billbug larvae

Chinch bug

Sod webworm

These insects along with next month's grubs, can be controlled with a late May application of Grub X (Mach2TM or Halofenozide), or MeritTM (Imidacloprid). Apply only when moisture is present in the soil. It is best to water these products in with 1/2 inch of water after application. This one application should give control through August.

Pre-emergent Crabgrass Control

Pre-emergent herbicides can be applied during the first weeks in April for control of crabgrass, barnyard grass, foxtail, and other annual grassy weeds. Treatment deadline is April 25 for northeastern Ohio. Some annual broadleaf weeds such as chickweed, oxalis, and prostrate spurge can also be controlled with this application. Five to seven moist nights

with 50°F soil temperatures are required for crabgrass to germinate.

Pre-emergent herbicides available to homeowners include Balan, Betasan, Chipco, Dacthal, Ronstar G, and Pendimethalin. An organic product is corn gluten meal. *The only pre-emergent product that can be used for crabgrass control over spring seeded lawn areas is Tupersan (or Siduron). Be sure to read product labels for correct use.*

Broadleaf Weed Control

Weeds must be actively growing for herbicides to be effective and temperatures above 50°F; May is generally a good month for broadleaf weed control. Selective post-emergent herbicides available to homeowners include 2,4-D, MCPP, and dicamba. Some of these products occur in combination with fertilizer and both tasks may be accomplished at the same time.

Granular weed control needs moisture on the leaves of weeds to be effective. For this reason, granular weed control is generally not as effective as liquid applications.

Yellow Nutsedge Control

Nutsedge will resume growth in May and can often be found through the summer. Basagran and halosulfuron (Dimension) is labeled for nutsedge. Herbicides must be applied when plants are young, for best results, with a repeat application made 10-14 days later.

Late Spring Diseases

Diseases which may be active in May include stripe smut, red thread, necrotic ring spot, yellow patch, slime molds, and fairy ring. For more information, refer to Fact Sheets or call the Extension office.

June

Fertilization

Eight to ten weeks after the spring fertilization (if lawns are irrigated or ample

rainfall occurs), apply 1/2 pound actual N per 1000 ft² using a complete fertilizer with 50% in slow release form. If no fertilizer was applied in spring, make a June application with adequate moisture present of 3/4# of N per 1000 ft². A 30-5-10 is equal to 1.66# of that fertilizer per 1000 ft².

Broadleaf Weed Control

Treatments using 2,4-D, MCPP, or dicamba can continue into early June as long as weeds are actively growing and the weather is not hot (over 80°F) and dry.

Mowing

Same as in May. Be sure blade is sharp.

Irrigation

Same as in May.

Lawn Insect Control

See May recommendation for most lawn insects.

For grubs, apply an early June application of Grub X (Mach 2TM or Halofenozide), or MeritTM (Imidacloprid) if not applied in May.

Crabgrass Control

Use post-emergent controls (DSMA or MSMA) where pre-emergence was not used or was ineffective. Apply when crabgrass is less than 1" tall; treating later is ineffective. Repeat treatments are necessary. Some discoloration of the grass may be expected.

Commercial companies have newer herbicides (i.e. Drive and Dimension) that provide excellent control with no lawn discoloration.

Small areas of crabgrass can be controlled by hand pulling before seed is set.

July

Mowing

Raise cutting height 1/2" to increase shading effect on soil and grass crowns for the summer

stress period. Depending on temperatures and rainfall or watering, grass may be going into a dormant state and mowing will be less frequent through July and August.

Irrigation

Follow these guidelines for watering to maintain a green lawn through the summer stress period, assuming rainfall is insufficient:

- Apply 1" of water per week (take some measurement to insure you are applying this amount). Check soil at 6" depth with a knife or trowel for moisture content.
- Water in the morning.
- Be aware of water use: a 7,500 square foot lawn will require 4,680 gallons of water per week.

If the grass is allowed to go dormant and rainfall is sparse, a light irrigation of 1/2" of water every 3-4 weeks is recommended to keep roots and crowns alive, but will not regreen the lawn. If dormancy is lengthy and temperatures are excessively high, some loss of lawn is probable.

Summer and Early Fall Disease

Diseases that may be active July through September include: brown patch, dollar spot, slime mold, powdery mildew, rust, anthracnose, fairy rings, melting-out, stripe smut, necrotic ring spot, and summer patch. Refer to Fact Sheets listed at the end of this guide.

August

Fertilization

At the end of August or early September (after the first rains occur), make the first fall application of a complete fertilizer, using 1# actual N per 1000 ft² of a 3-1-2 ratio fertilizer. 35 to 50% should be in slow release form.

Mowing

Depending on temperatures and moisture, mowing will be less frequent in August.

Irrigation

Same as in July.

Lawn Insect Control

Watch for populations of these insects and manage as needed:

Chinch Bug - mid to late August

Sod Webworm - through August

White Grubs - Control action is needed when grub populations are greater than 10 per square foot. Treat about mid to late August with trichlorofan (i.e. Dylox or Proxol). Check turf 2-4 weeks after treatment to make sure late season grubs are not present. Reapply if necessary.

September

Seeding, Overseeding

Ideally, any seeding, overseeding, or other renovation is done by September 15 for best fall establishment. If seeding cannot be done by October 15 in northern Ohio, postpone the job until spring. Weather variations may shorten or extend the window for seeding.

Core Aeration - Thatch Management

If thatch is 1/2" or greater in thickness, it should be managed with core aeration. Core aeration can be done to reduce soil compaction or to prepare soil for overseeding. The machine should be run in three or four directions over the lawn to create at least 9 holes per square foot (more if you are overseeding). Soil should be moist to pull good cores; cores should be 2" to 3" in length.

In heavy thatch situations, hiring a commercial company that can provide equipment with more core capacity may be necessary.

Fertilization

Apply 1# actual N per 1000 ft² if none was applied in late August with 30-35% in slow release form. Best applied early in the month. If only one fertilizer application is to be made in the fall, make it in late September or early October.

EXTENSION BULLETINS AND FACT SHEETS FOR HOME LAWN CARE

Bulletins*

- #546 Lawn Establishment*
 #L-187 Management of Turfgrass Pests,
 Weeds, Diseases, and Insects*

Fact Sheets*

Cultural Care

- HYG-1191 Lawn Care Plans*
 HYG-4001 Broadleaf Weed Control in
 Lawns
 HYG-4002 Annual Grass Control*
 HYG-4005 Managing Moss and Algae in the
 Home Lawn
 HYG-4006 Fertilization of Lawn*
 HYG-4008 Thatch - The Accumulation in
 Lawns*
 HYG-4010 Yellow Nutsedge Control in
 Home Lawns*
 HYG-4011 Turfgrass Species Selection*
 HYG-4019 Lawn Establishment
 HYG-4020 Lawn Mowing*
 HYG-4022 Understanding a Fertilizer Label
 HYG-4025 What To Look for in a Lawn Care
 Service*
 HYG-4026 Lime and the Home Lawn*
 HYG-4027 Lawn Grass Cultivar Selection*
 HYG-4028 Interpreting a Soil Test for
 Lawns*
 HYG-4029 Managing Turfgrass under
 Drought Conditions*
 HYG-4030 Growing Turfgrass in the Shade
 HYG-4031 Natural Organic Lawn Care for
 Ohio*

The Lawn Care Calendar was prepared by:
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Entomology

- W-11 Controlling Moles in the Home
 Lawn
 HYG-2011 Sod Webworm Management in
 Lawns*
 HYG-2500 White Grubs in Turfgrass*
 HYG-2502 Billbugs in Turfgrass*
 HYG-2503 Chinch Bug in Turfgrass*

Lawn Diseases

- HYG-3074 Slime Mold on Turfgrass*
 HYG-3075 Dollar Spot on Turfgrass*
 HYG-3081 Powdery Mildew on Turfgrass*
 HYG-3082 Summer Patch on Turfgrass*
 HYG-3084 Brown Patch on Turfgrass*

Contact your local Extension office for current prices on bulletins and mailing information on fact sheets.

* - available online at <http://ohioline.osu.edu> and click on the Yard and Garden icon

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Ohio State University Extension is implied. Although every attempt is made to produce information that is complete, timely, and accurate, the pesticide user bears responsibility of consulting the pesticide label and adhering to those directions.

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Mowing

Lower cutting height back to 2" - 2 1/2" (2 1/2" - 3" for tall fescue). Mowing frequency will likely increase with cooler temperatures and moisture.

Irrigation

Same as August, if needed.

Lawn Insect Control

White grubs may be present in September and October. These late season, older grubs are voracious feeders and chemical control may be difficult. Use trichlorofon (i.e. Dylox or Proxol) and be sure to irrigate well after application, or have a commercial lawn care firm treat for these grubs.

Broadleaf Weed Control

Broadleaf weeds will resume growth with cooler temperature and moisture. Fall is often the best time to control weeds since the grass fills in as the weeds die, and there is less chance of injury to flower and vegetable gardens compared to spring applications.

October
Seeding, Overseeding

Accomplish no later than October 15 for northern Ohio. Success of germination will decline with cooler soil temperatures.

Sodding

Sod should be laid no later than 4 weeks before the ground freezes for good root establishment. Follow good watering practices for establishment.

Mowing

Continue mowing as long as grass is actively growing.

Leaf Removal

Fallen tree leaves should remain no longer than two weeks on grass. Grass may become stressed and discolor if sunlight is limited for long periods.

Mulching mowers lessen the need for leaf removal by chopping up the leaves and returning organic matter to the soil. Mowing will need to be more frequent to accomplish this.

Fall Diseases

Watch for powdery mildew and rust, two diseases that may be active in October.

Late Fall Fertilization

Apply 1# - 2# actual N/1000 ft² in a fast release (water soluble) fertilizer in late October or early November after the first hard frost. Grass should still be green and air temperatures typically below 55°F. This is the most important fertilization of the year for turfgrass. *Note: Research has shown that the early fall application of fertilizer is critical to attaining the full benefit of the late fall fertilization.*

November & December**Late Fall Fertilization**

Application should be made no later than November 15. See October note for details.

Mowing

For the last mowing of the season, cut the grass at 2" to avoid problems with snow mold, especially if you are in an area where winter snow cover is common.