

News Article to:

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## Best-Looking Lawn in the County

Whether your goal is to have the best-looking lawn in the county, or to have the happiest wife who is not complaining about how the lawn looks, let's go over some good practices to achieve. First and foremost as we begin talking about any kind of forage growth, the most important practice is a good-quality soil with the proper pH and nutrient levels. Hopefully, you took a soil sample last fall or winter and have already applied the proper nutrients for your lawn; however, in this case, it is better late than never.

After you have established a good soil base, you need to decide on the desired turfgrass for your lawn. There are several varieties suitable for Camp County. One of the most common and easiest to manage is Common Bermuda; however, there are also St. Augustine, Centipede, Buffalo Grass, and Zoysiagrass, along with others.

There are several factors to look at when choosing a variety of turfgrass, such as; sun vs. shade, water requirements, disease potential, traffic tolerance, mowing frequency, and leaf texture. Each one of the different varieties seems to thrive in one or more of the circumstances, so take the time to look into your situation before making a decision.

After establishment, you are on the downhill slide. You now need to focus on keeping the enemy (WEEDS) out and provide the proper amount of water. As with everything nowadays, we want the simplest method with the least amount of effort. Luckily, we have irrigation systems available to us that water automatically. It is very important, though, if you do not have a system that reads the soil moisture, to not just turn on the system in April and then turn it off after the first frost.

There are a few ways to measure the amount of water your system is dispersing. One of the easiest methods is to eat tuna fish out of the can for a week and save the cans. Once you have your cans, place them throughout your lawn and let your system run its course. After it is complete, measure how deep the water is in the cans, and that will be the average amount of "rainfall" your lawn received.

You need to adjust your system so that you are applying an inch of water at a time. An amount over an inch will mostly run off and become a wasted resource. You may need to shorten the amount of time your system is running, or let it run a little longer.

The next question is: *How often do you need to water your lawn?* A good trick that will tell you when your grass needs a drink is to walk across it, and look back. If your footsteps quickly pop back up as if you never walked through it ... perfect! If your steps remain in the grass, you need to water your lawn.

Now the final topic of discussion is defending your lawn against invaders.

The word “weed” has several different meanings today. However, I like to use the definition of my Merriam-Webster Dictionary: *a plant that is not valued where it is growing and is usually of vigorous growth; especially one that tends to overgrow or choke out more desirable plants.*

There are several ways to combat weeds:

- 1) You can walk around with a plastic bag, and pull up every weed, placing them in the bag and disposing of the bag with your weekly trash pick-up.
- 2) Take the Jerry French approach and “Roundup” every single weed, letting the Bermuda work its way back in eventually.
- 3) Or, employing the simplest method with the least amount of effort, you can use the chemically-controlled method. However, to successfully combat weeds, you must first identify the species and then find an herbicide that kills the targeted weed which will not harm your turfgrass. For those of you with St. Augustine grass, pay special attention when selecting an herbicide.

It is very important to read and follow the label directions when using herbicides. Aside from it being the law, it can be very dangerous and harmful to misuse the product.

If you have any other questions, please give me a call at 903-856-5005, or come by the office.