



Prescription Lawn Care

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These prescriptions will result in the best possible lawn for the turf-type you grow!

Mowing Prescription

The rule of thumb for mowing home lawns is not to remove more than one-third of the leaf surface at any one time. With this mowing schedule, you no longer need to bag your grass clippings.

Type of grass	Mower Setting (inches)	Mow when or before this height (inches)
Common Bermuda	1-1/2"	2-1/4"
"Tif" Bermuda	1"	1-1/2"
Buffalo	2"	3"
Centepede	2"	3"
St. Augustine	3"	4-1/2"
Tall Fescue	2-1/2"	3-3/4"
Zoysia	2"	3"
Bluegrass	2"	3"

Grass clippings left on your lawn will not contribute to thatch, but return valuable nutrients to the soil. They usually contain about 4 percent nitrogen, 0.5 percent phosphorus and about 2 percent potassium, as well as all the necessary minor elements plants need.

When to Fertilize

Common Bermuda

April 10, June 1, July 15, and September 15

"Tif" Bermuda

April 1, May 1, June 1, July 1, August 1, September 1 and October 1

Buffalo

May 1 and September 15

Centepede

May 15 and September 15

St. Augustine

April 15, June 1 and September 15

Tall Fescue and Bluegrass

March 1, September 15 and November 15

Zoysia

May 1, June 1 and September 15

Watering Prescription

Turfgrasses vary in their need for water:

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Tall Fescue (requires the most water) | 5. Zoysia |
| 2. 'Reveille' bluegrass | 6. Common Bermuda |
| 3. St. Augustine | 7. Buffalo (requires the least water) |
| 4. "TIF" Bermuda | |

During the driest period of summer, our lawns usually require about 1 inch of water every 5 to 6 days. Most hose sprinklers apply 1/4 to 1/3 inch of water per hour, so they would need to run approximately 4 hours in one spot. If water runs off the lawn before 1 inch is applied, turn the sprinkler off, let the water soak in for about an hour, and then continue watering.

The best time to water is early morning, so less water is lost by evaporation. The worst time is in the evening because the lawn stays wet all night. This encourages disease development. Lawns watered too frequently tend to develop shallow root systems which make them more susceptible to grub damage.

Fertilizing Prescription

The best way to find out which analysis of fertilizer is ideal for your lawn, how much of that fertilizer your lawn needs and when that fertilizer should be applied is to SOIL TEST. A kit with complete instructions is available through your County Extension Office.

If soil testing is not convenient, the following plan will work for most lawns, but a SOIL TEST is the best way to go.

The rate of fertilizer application, the frequency of application, the ratio of nutrients in the fertilizer and the source of nitrogen all have a great deal to do with how fast the lawn grows.

This fertilizing plan is designed to allow the lawn to grow at a moderate rate and still have good color.

Fertilizer ratio (NPK)	Fertilizer analysis	Application rate-pounds per 1,000 sq. ft.
3-1-2	12-4-8	6
	15-5-10	5
	21-7-14	4
or		
4-1-2	16-4-8	5
	20-5-10	4

For slow, even growth, use a fertilizer containing either sulfur-coated urea or ureaformaldehyde as a nitrogen source rather than soluble forms. The soluble forms, such as urea or ammonium sulfate, tend to produce very fast growth for short periods of time.

Weed Control Prescription

Weed control is accomplished through both cultural and chemical means. Cultural control includes pulling weeds as well proper fertilizing, watering, and mowing. Fertilizing and watering stimulate growth and mowing causes dense lateral branching which helps crowd weeds out. Frequent mowing also helps remove seed heads before they mature.

After everything culturally possible has been done, weeds may still be so prevalent that chemical control with herbicides is required to achieve the desired level of control. Herbicides are classified as pre-emergent or post-emergent depending on whether they control weeds before or after they emerge from the soil.

Our greatest weed seed germination occurs in the spring during March and April and during the fall during September and October. Pre-emergent herbicides applied at the beginning of these two seed germination periods, on March 1 and September 1, will keep lawn weeds to a minimum.

For control of grassy weeds such as poa annua and crabgrass use a product labeled for your lawn type containing the active ingredient benefin, bensulide, pendimethlin, oryzalin, or prodiamine. For broadleaf weeds such as chickweed and henbit, use a product containing isoxaben, oryzalin, or pendimethalin.

Pre-emergent herbicides are never 100 percent effective and some weeds inevitably escape control. These can still be controlled however with post-emergent herbicides. For broadleaf weeds, Trimec® which contains 2,4-D, dicamba, and MCPP is the most common post-emergence herbicide in use today. You can remove warm-season grassy weeds from bermuda with MSMA but this will kill St. Augustine. with Homeowners don't have an effective post-emergent herbicide for control of cool-season grasses but commercial applicators do so hiring a professional is an option in this case.

Post-emergent weed control is most effective when the weeds are young. The best times to spray post emergent herbicides is during late October and early November for cool-season weeds and during late May and early June for summer weeds. By then most of the weed seeds have germinated for their season, the weeds are still young, and it's warm enough to achieve good control.

Regardless of the herbicide, be sure the turf types you have are on the product label. Rates of application may vary according to the turf type. Read and follow all label instructions for safe, effective, and lawful use. Measure your yard, weigh your material, keep it on target (out of the street), and do not exceed labeled rates. Never apply herbicides before a rain. Rain is just as likely to wash it away as to wash it in, polluting the environment and wasting your money.

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