

Todd Vineyard

Ag. News

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Lawns

It is that time of year that I encounter a number of individuals who either call or come to the office who have questions regarding their lawn. One of those questions has to do with timing of fertilizer application. The rule of thumb that seems to work is that when you have mowed 2-3 times it is time to fertilize. Due to a cooler or milder spring and irregular weather we experienced this spring the growth of most of our turf grasses has been slowed considerably. Understand, that I mean turf grasses not the winter ryegrass and rescue grass we see growing like wild. Unfortunately, we can't do anything for those now; but, the good news is the heat is here and they will soon go away. If you are having to mow, that indicates the turf is actively growing and is therefore ready for that first application, preferably I would encourage you to take a soil sample to see exactly what your lawn needs, if not, products with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio would most likely do a good job. Apply at a rate of 1 pound per 1000 square feet of turf. The weed and feed products that are so popular are not a good idea since your weed control should have been applied weeks ago. If you are having major weed problems give me a call or bring in a sample and we'll come up with a plan for your yard.

Another question that comes up regularly is concerning dead areas in the turf. There can be many causes of dead spots. One question you need to answer is, can these dead spots be lifted by hand and or rolled up like carpet. If so, your lawn may have been damaged by white grubs. White grubs are simply the larval stage of the May or June beetle. These root-feeding grubs are creamy-white and c-shaped with three pairs of legs, and their damage normally occurs during the summer and early fall. They feed on grass roots and the damaged areas begin to show up as weakened or dying grass in irregular shapes. Eventually, if the population and damage is severe, these areas will die. To locate grubs, dig with a spade or shovel to a depth of at least 4 inches. Finding 3-5 grubs per square spot suggests an insecticide treatment is needed. Apply control in June or July and use a product that contains imidacloprid, halofenozide, trichlorfon or carbaryl. Be sure to read and follow label directions. For those interested in non-chemical control, beneficial nematodes can be purchased in garden centers or through garden supply catalogs. Research shows that under good conditions, commercially-available nematodes can reduce white grub populations by up to 50 per cent. There are several good products available locally. If you would like a list of grub control products call or come by the Extension office or visit the Aggie-Turf website at <http://aggie-turf.tamu.edu>.