



Monthly Turf Guide

INCLUDES SOD INSTALLATION GUIDE

Thank you for choosing us for your turfgrass needs. This guide will help you to maintain and enjoy your new lawn in a manner consistent with the principles of water conservation. It provides installation advice and monthly turf maintenance information.

These are general recommendations for maintaining a healthy lawn during normal temperatures. Things will change for different site conditions and if temperatures are above or below average for the time of year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Sod Installation Guide:	
• Soil Conditions and Preparation	2–3
• Sod Installation	3–4
• Initial Watering, Mowing and Fertilizing	4–5
Monthly Turf Maintenance Information	6–17
Turf Tips:	
• Watering	18
• Fertilizing.....	19
• Soil Amendments	19
• Mowing	20
• Dethatch/Aerify	21
• Seeding	21
• Pre-emergent Weed Control.....	21
• Fall Overseeding.....	22
• Spring Transition.....	23
• Troubleshooting.....	24–28

SOD INSTALLATION GUIDE

Page 2

SOIL CONDITIONS

- Sandy soils will require more frequent watering and fertilizing than clay soils and will require a "kick" in the summer. Ammonium sulfate is recommended.
- Soils that are clay, hard, compacted, exposed to high traffic or have poor drainage restrict root growth and benefit from aeration followed by a top dressing of organic mulch, sand and gypsum. Aeration of cool season grasses is seldom recommended.
- Topdressing with a good organic mulch, especially after aerating, is an easy way to replenish the organic matter in the soil.

SOIL PREPARATION

- Kill and remove weeds and unwanted grasses from lawn area. Actively growing weeds and grass can be killed by spraying a chemical containing glyphosate. **Follow all label directions!** To ensure a complete kill, allow 10 days after spraying. Then remove the dead plants. A second application may be applied after 10-14 days.
- Remove all rock and surface debris.

- Prepare a seed bed and build up the soil by incorporating soil amendments to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Organic amendments composed of well-cured, composted, vegetative material are best. However, other organic amendments such as wood forest mulch and manure are also commonly used. Keep in mind that any organic compost that is inadequately cured can be a major source of weed seeds. Manure is often high in salt, and in some soils can cause a salinity problem. Other beneficial amendments are sand, gypsum, and soil sulfur. **In very hard, rocky soils it may be necessary to excavate and replace the top 6 inches with a good topsoil.**
- A soil test can take the guess work out of determining which amendments and what quantities are needed for a particular soil type. Consult West Coast Turf or the phone directory for a soil testing service.
- Always incorporate or rototill in amendments—**NEVER LAYER!**
- Even if amendments are not added, it is still recommended that the soil be rototilled to prepare a seed bed. Always take care to check for and remove large rocks, construction material, or other hidden debris.

- The finished grade should be 1 to 1-1/2 inches below the sidewalks, patios, borders, etc., to allow room for the sod, and should slope away from foundations to prevent damage from standing water. All of West Coast Turf's sod is uniformly cut and will conform to the grade on which it is installed.
- A rough grade cannot be covered or corrected by the sod.
A rough grade = a rough lawn!
- Install a sprinkler system with the heads 1/2 inch above grade and spaced to provide head-to-head coverage. An automated system with a timer is strongly recommended. Some retailers will provide help with designing a sprinkler system. Check with a West Coast Turf office for a list of vendors that provide such services.
- Follow with a thorough watering. This builds a base of soil moisture, settles sprinkler trenches and air pockets, and allows an opportunity to check out the distribution of the sprinkler system.
- Fine grade if necessary. Now you are ready to order a West Coast Turf lawn.

SOD INSTALLATION

Sod is a living plant that requires ground contact and moisture to survive. It should be installed as soon as possible after delivery. Prior to sod installation it is recommended to apply a starter fertilizer.

Steps For Sod Installation:

1. **IMMEDIATELY** upon the arrival of your sod, begin laying the rolls adjacent to the longest boundary of the area. If there is no straight border, stretch a string along the length of the longest axis and use this string as a guide for the first row of sod. Stagger each new row of sod so that the seams are offset in a brick-like pattern. Butt ends and edges tightly together. Trim sod with a knife if necessary to fit into an area.
2. In hot weather, protect uninstalled sod by placing it in the shade if possible, covering it with moist burlap or a wet sheet, and/or lightly water.
3. Avoid leaving small strips of sod at outer edges as they will not retain moisture as well as the larger slabs. On slopes, lay the sod perpendicular to the slope to minimize erosion.

SOD INSTALLATION GUIDE

4. To avoid indentions or air pockets, refrain from repeated walking or kneeling on the turf during installation or just after watering.
5. **NEVER LET INSTALLED SOD LAY FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES WITHOUT LIGHTLY WATERING.**
6. When all the sod is laid, water lightly and roll with a lawn roller to ensure that the sod is bonded to the soil. This soil-to-sod bonding promotes quicker rooting and reduces the chance for the sod to dry.
7. Water newly installed sod thoroughly to ensure a base of moisture.

Initial Watering (Newly Installed Lawns)

Page 4

Basic Rule—Water just often enough and long enough to keep the sod pads and the top two inches of the soil constantly moist. Do not allow water to stand for long periods and avoid excess runoff.

How long and how often to water a newly installed lawn will vary depending on the season and the individual irrigation system. The lawn will need to be watered approximately 3 to 4 times daily during daylight hours, for 5 to 7 minutes per watering.

Once the new roots begin to "tack" the sod to the soil (7 to 10 days April–October, and 2 to 3 weeks November–March), hold the water for one day so the ground can dry sufficiently to get in a light mowing without rutting. Following this mowing, reprogram the irrigation timer to water once a day (during the morning) for a slightly longer period than that used when watering 3 to 4 times per day. Continue to probe the ground during this transition stage to maintain 6 to 8 inches of good soil moisture. After three to four weeks, the newly installed sod should be sufficiently rooted. At this time switch to a watering schedule recommended for an established lawn.

Initial Mowing

The first mowing can be done when the sod begins to root, usually within two weeks of installation.

- Cut no more than one-third of the grass blade at any one mowing.
- Use sharp mower blades.
- Mow when the grass is dry.
- Use the type of mower recommended for the specific grass planted.

Initial Fertilizing

Two weeks after installation, fertilize with a balanced fertilizer.

JANUARY

Cool Season Varieties

Fescue, West Coaster, Blue, Rye, Natives

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 5–10 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8-10 inches.
- Mowing: Regular mowing.
DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

St. Augustine, Bermuda, Seashore Paspalum, Kikuyu

- Fertilizing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—None
- Watering: Dormant—Deep water to a soil depth of 8–10 inches once a month; Overseeded—Follow cool season watering guide.
- Mowing: Dormant—None
DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Dormant—None; Overseeded sod available.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

FEBRUARY

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 5–10 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8-10 inches.
- Mowing: Regular mowing.
DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Dormant—Water to a soil depth of 8–10 inches once a month; Overseeded—Follow cool season watering guide.
- Mowing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—Begin working mowing height down to 3/4 inch by March.
DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Dormant—None; Overseeded sod available.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

MARCH

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Regular mowing.
DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: To control spring and early summer weeds, apply once during the first two weeks of March.
Follow label directions!

Warm Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—None
- Watering: Dormant—Deep water to a soil depth of 8–10 inches every other week; Overseeded—Follow cool season watering guide.
- Mowing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—Maintain mowing height at 3/4 inch. DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Dormant—None; Overseeded sod available.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: To control spring and summer weeds, apply once during the first two weeks of March.
Follow label directions!

APRIL

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Regular mowing.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: Non-Overseeded and Overseeded—5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Non-Overseeded—Deep water to a soil depth of 8-10 inches every 5–7 days depending on weather. Overseeded—Follow cool season watering guide.
- Mowing: Non-Overseeded—Mow at recommended height to encourage turf density. Overseeded—Mow at 3/4 inch or less to help transition.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available in non-overseeded and overseeded. The non-overseeded is recommended.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Regular mowing.
- Dethatch/Aerify: Aerify only if absolutely necessary. If required, aerify after May 15th using a solid tine aerifier.
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

(Non-overseeded and Overseeded)

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Recommend regular mowing height. If overseed is still green, lower height to 1/2 inch until overseed dies off, then mow at recommended height.
- Dethatch/Aerify: Remove thatch when more than 1/2 inch thick. During the first four weeks of summer, aerify as needed to allow moisture to penetrate.
- Sodding: Available—Non-overseeded only.

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 2–3 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at maximum recommended height to enhance drought tolerance.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

(Non-overseeded only—overseed should be gone by the end of the month)

- Fertilizing: 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Recommend regular mowing. If overseed is still green, keep height at 1/2 inch until overseed dies off, then mow at maximum recommended height to enhance drought tolerance.
- Dethatch/Aerify: Remove thatch when more than 1/2 inch thick. During the first four weeks of summer aerify as needed to allow moisture to penetrate.
- Sodding: Available—Non-overseeded only.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 2–3 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at maximum recommended height to enhance drought tolerance.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available—Caution: during periods of high humidity (common in July), new sod that is kept wet by watering frequently is prone to fungal disease.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

(Non-overseeded only)

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Recommend regular mowing.
- Dethatch/Aerify: Remove thatch when more than 1/2 inch thick. During the first four weeks of summer aerify as needed to allow moisture to penetrate.
- Sodding: Available—Non-overseeded only.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 2–3 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at maximum recommended height to enhance drought tolerance.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available—Caution: during periods of high humidity (common in August), new sod that is kept wet by watering frequently is prone to fungal disease.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

(Non-overseeded only)

- Fertilizing: 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at recommended height.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available—Non-overseeded. (Overseeded sod will be available around the first of November.)
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

SEPTEMBER

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: After humidity drops, use 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 2–3 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at maximum recommended height to enhance drought tolerance.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available—Caution: During periods of high humidity (common during the first half of September), new sod that is kept wet by watering frequently is prone to fungal disease.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: Apply once. Follow label directions!

Warm Season Varieties

(Non-overseeded only)

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8-10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at maximum recommended height to enhance drought tolerance. If planning to overseed, begin to lower mowing height in preparation.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available—non-overseeded only.
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: If NOT overseeding, apply once. Follow label directions!

OCTOBER

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 3–5 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Recommend regular mowing.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

(Non-overseeded only)

- Fertilizing: 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 3–7 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Mow at recommended height.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available—Non-overseeded (Overseeded sod will be available around the first of November.)
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Deep water every 5–10 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Recommend regular mowing. DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: None
- Watering: Prior to grass going dormant, deep water every 5–10 days. Once the grass is dormant, deep water once a month to a soil depth of 8–10 inches. Overseeded—Follow cool season watering guide.
- Mowing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—mow at recommended height. DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Dormant—None; Overseeded—Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Cool Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Deep water every 5–10 days, depending on the weather, to a soil depth of 8–10 inches.
- Mowing: Recommend regular mowing.
DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

Warm Season Varieties

- Fertilizing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet using a balanced fertilizer.
- Watering: Dormant—Deep water once a month to a soil depth of 8-10 inches; Overseeded—Follow cool season watering guide.
- Mowing: Dormant—None; Overseeded—mow at recommended height. DO NOT mow or walk on frosted turf.
- Dethatch/Aerify: None
- Sodding: Dormant—None; Overseeded—Available
- Pre-Emergent Weed Control: None

WATERING

- The key is to water no more than necessary and to water deeply. Deep watering helps to promote deep roots and to remove salts from the root zone.
- Water needs depend on the weather and soil conditions.
- Let the soil dry between waterings.
- Only water as often as needed to avoid wilt. Symptoms of wilt include a bluish tinge and noticeable footprints of crushed leaves after walking across a lawn.
- Water long enough to move water to a depth of 8–10 inches per watering. Push a probe (such as a 10 inch screwdriver) into the ground 30 minutes after watering. It should penetrate 8–10 inches easily.
- Reduce watering after heavy rains to avoid soil that stays wet for periods of 7–10 days.
- As weather turns cooler, wetter, or more humid, turn off the irrigation system to evaluate how quickly wilt occurs. Reprogram to adjust to changing conditions.

- Early morning is the best time to water.
- Check sprinkler heads for head to head even coverage and proper operation at least seasonally.
- To avoid runoff on slopes, or if water does not penetrate 8 to 10 inches without runoff, use a water-and-wait cycle. Program sprinkler system to run for a few minutes, shut down long enough for the water to soak in, then water for a few more minutes. Keep this water-and-wait cycle going until water penetrates 8 to 10 inches without runoff.

How Much Water?

Use this simple method to determine how much water has been applied to the lawn:

Place several small, same-sized cans (such as tuna fish or pet food) around different areas of the lawn before turning on the sprinklers. Measure the depth of water collected in the cans. Compare the depth to the time the sprinklers were on to establish how long to run the system. One inch of water will penetrate five inches in clay soil, seven to eight inches in loam, and twelve inches in sandy soil.

FERTILIZING

There are different recommendations when it comes to fertilizing. To keep it as simple as possible, we suggest the following:

- Cool Season Varieties: Using a 16-16-16 or a 16-6-8 fertilizer, apply 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet once every 3 months (ie. March, June, September, December).
- Warm Season Varieties: Using a 16-16-16 or a 16-6-8 fertilizer, apply 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet once every other month from April to October. Note: If the warm season grass is overseeded, continue to apply fertilizer at the same rate in December and February.
- Apply Ironite at a rate of 5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet once in the spring and again in the fall. Apply before frost, as iron in the soil is not available when the soil is cold and wet or the soil pH is high. For a quick iron response, use a foliar application of iron, which is a water soluble source of iron usually applied through a sprayer.

CAUTION: Iron will stain hardscapes, concrete, and cool decks.

- For other grass varieties or special soil conditions, consult one of the professionals at West Coast Turf.
- To pinpoint specific problems it may be advisable to do a soil or tissue test to establish guidelines for fertility and soil amendment applications. A soil test will give the nutrient levels in a soil, and a tissue test will indicate how much of which nutrients the grass has absorbed.

SOIL AMENDMENTS

- On high pH soils, Gypsum should be applied twice a year, or up to four times per year depending on soil type. Gypsum can be surface applied and should be watered into the soil heavily to maximize its benefits. Gypsum helps reduce disease, maintain soil structure, enhance water penetration, and aids in the removal of salts. Granular or pelletized gypsum is easiest to work with. Follow label directions.

MOWING

- Mow frequently enough so that NO more than 1/3 of the grass blade at each mowing is removed.
- Keep mower blades sharp.
- Mow when grass is dry. However, during rainy weather it is better to mow wet grass than to let it grow too tall.
- Refer to mowing height chart. Grass height is measured from the soil surface to the tip of the blade.

Notes:

A. As a general rule, grasses mowed at or below 1 inch should be mowed with a reel mower. Grasses mowed at or above

RECOMMENDED MOWER TYPES & MOWER HEIGHTS

Variety	Mower (see note A)	Height in inches (see note B)
West Coaster	Rotary or Reel	1 – 3
Blue, Rye	Rotary or Reel	1/2 – 3
Fine Fescue	Rotary	2 – 6 (see note C)
TifSport	Reel	1/2 – 1 1/2 (see note D)
Tifgreen	Reel	1/4 – 1 1/2 (see note D)
Tifway II	Reel	1/2 – 1 1/2 (see note D)
Bull's-Eye Bermuda	Rotary or Reel	1/2 – 1 1/2 (see note D)
Bandera	Rotary or Reel	1/2 – 3 (see note D)
Palmetto St. Augustine	Rotary	1 – 3 (cannot be overseeded)
DeAnza Zoysia	Rotary or Reel	1/2 – 2 (see note D)
Seashore Paspalum	Rotary or Reel	1/2 – 2 (see note D)
Native Bentgrass	Rotary	1 1/2 – unmowed
Native Fine Fescue	Rotary	1 1/2 – unmowed

1 1/2 inches are best mowed with a rotary mower. Between 1 inch and 1 1/2 inches, the mower type depends mostly on the variety and the appearance.

B. Taller mowing heights reduce heat/drought stress in summer.

C. At 4–6 inches, Fine Fescue serves as a ground cover and requires mowing only if necessary for weed control.

D. If the lawn was overseeded, by no later than March 1, work height down to 3/4 inch and maintain there until the warm season grass begins a rapid green up. At that time reduce mowing height to 1/2 inch until the overseed dies. Then resume normal summer mowing.

FALL OVERSEEDING FOR BERMUDA LAWNS

- Do not overseed a warm season lawn until it has been established for at least three months. It is best to not overseed the first year to allow rhizomes to mature.
- Do not fertilize for four to six weeks before overseeding.
- Perennial ryegrass is preferred to annual rye for winter color because its blade is darker green, hardier, finer and easier to mow.
- Even if you dethatched in June or July, because most warm season grasses are so thick, it may be necessary to lightly dethatch again. The purpose is to open the canopy of the grass to allow the seeds to make contact with the soil. Set the verticutter so the blades are 1/4 inch above the soil. Verticut in two directions. DO NOT "dig" into the soil. This will only damage the grass making next year's spring transition more difficult to rake and remove thatch.
- Scalp the lawn if using a reel mower to 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch. Most rotary mowers cannot be set lower than 3/4 inch, which is acceptable.
- Apply seed at a rate of 10 to 15 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft., putting 1/2 out per seeding in perpendicular directions.

- Rake or drag to ensure the seeds make contact with the soil.

Page 22

- Lightly cover seed with no more than 1/8 inch of a weed and saltfree mulch. This topdressing is an optional step that helps retain moisture and increases temperature for quicker seed germination.
- Keep seeds damp by watering three to four times per day using 5 to 10 minute cycles. After germination (7 to 10 days), water once per day. After the second mowing, water only as often as needed. This is dependent upon temperature, wind, and rain, and may vary from once every two weeks to every other day. Water only often enough to avoid wilt between waterings.
- When the ryegrass reaches 2" lightly mow. Mow no more than 1/3 of the grass blade at any mowing using sharp mower blades. Perennial rye can be mowed lower, but it is best to allow the grass to become established first (when each seedling has 3-4 blades).
- Two weeks after seeding, fertilize with 10 lbs per 1000 square feet of a 6-20-20 starter fertilizer. Fertilizing too early may cause the warm season grass to compete strongly with the rye and weaken its establishment. Waiting too long may cause seedlings to starve and die. One month after seeding, resume normal fertilization.
- Enjoy!

DETHATCH/AERIFY

(For warm season grasses only)

- Dethatch and aerify during the first four weeks of summer when the turfgrass is growing vigorously.
- Remove thatch* when more than 1/2 inch thick.
- For compacted soils with poor drainage, aerify and topdress as necessary.
- For lawns with low traffic, aerify every 2–4 years.
- Most lawns will respond to a top dressing of organic matter and/or sand and gypsum after aerification.
- DO NOT dethatch heavily in the fall. It can damage and weaken the grass resulting in plant loss or a slow, weak, spring transition and green-up.
- Dethatch lightly in the fall only if heavy thatch exists (more than 1/2 inch), and just enough to open the canopy and allow the seeds to make contact with the soil (if overseeding).

* Thatch is a fibrous, straw-like layer of dead grass stems, leaves, roots and stolons between the green leaves and the surface of the soil.

SEEDING

- For Tall Fescue, or "West Coaster" have seed available to "sweeten" thin/worn areas that can occur from time to time (such as a dog's urine burn).
- Overseeding a warm season lawn each fall with perennial ryegrass can provide a year-round green lawn.
- DO NOT overseed a warm season lawn until it has been established for at least three months. It is best to not overseed a lawn the first year to allow rhizomes to fully mature.

PRE-EMERGENT WEED CONTROL

- Use pre-emergent ONLY on established turf that has roots 4-6 inches deep. Usually by the third mowing the roots are deep enough.
- Use pre-emergent ONLY if needed (if you have more weeds than you can tolerate).

SPRING TRANSITION FOR OVERSEEDED BERMUDA LAWNS

When Spring comes to the low desert it is time to wake your dormant bermuda lawn. You can have a beautiful, lush summer lawn by following this recommended procedure. It is very important to follow this transition procedure or the bermudagrass may be damaged and have a slow Spring recovery. Whether you installed new overseeded sod this winter (late October through April, sometimes into May) or overseeded an established bermuda lawn, the spring transition procedure is the same. The goal is to help the bermuda get its share of sunlight, nutrients, and water so it can successfully compete with the ryegrass until the rye is gone. Bermuda lawns need to be managed throughout the spring transition, which begins when the soil temperature is at 64° F by 8:00 a.m.

Mowing

Beginning in late March, gradually lower the mowing height one setting every week until the mowing height is down to one-half inch for reel mowers and three-quarters inch for rotary mowers. Remember to remove no more than one-third of the grass leaf per mowing as you work down to these heights. Keep the mower at this lowered setting until the transition is complete—the ryegrass is gone and only bermuda is growing.

Watering

Continue a normal watering schedule of deep watering (the water should penetrate 8–10 inches) every 3–5 days. Some people are under the misconception that if they withhold water for 10–14 days the ryegrass will be killed. Do not do this! Withholding water may only achieve a partial kill-off of the ryegrass while damaging the underlying bermuda as it is coming out of dormancy.

Fertilizing

Refer to the section on Fertilizing under Maintenance for Established Lawns for general information. Supplemental iron may be needed for good general color during spring transition.

Other Tips

Do not verticut or scalp the ryegrass to force it out during transition. Experience has shown that this not only results in partial kill-off, but your lawn will look terrible for about a month; meanwhile you still have to mow the ryegrass. It also is a good idea to avoid using herbicides during transition periods as the tender bermuda can be damaged. By following the spring transition procedure you will start to notice a minimum of browning from the dying overseed. This usually begins about the first of May and should be complete by mid-June. This process is based primarily on soil temperature. Areas of your lawn that show poor transition to bermuda by mid-summer are probably growing in shaded and/or wet areas which favor ryegrass.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Turfgrass problems occur when the grass becomes unhealthy to the point of losing its competitiveness and ability to survive. When lawns show signs of problems or damage, there are two basic steps to follow: determine the problem and implement a solution.

DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

This is a process of elimination and includes two major categories: poor management by the homeowner or naturally occurring stresses in the environment.

Poor Management

Soil: Improper soil preparation or management. Thin or layered soils-cause a lack of good drainage and/or proper moisture depth for turfgrass as water does not penetrate deeply.

Water: Too little, too much, poor timing, or uneven coverage- More than 90% of lawn problems are water related.

Mowing: Improper height, frequency, or the wrong type of mower; dull blade.

Fertilization: Fertilizing too much, too little, or using the wrong type of fertilizer.

Thatch: Not dethatching when necessary.

Aeration: Not using core aeration when necessary.

Drainage: Poor or lack of drainage.

Traffic: Too much traffic without adequate aeration or soil amendment.

Soil Test: Lack of soil testing information may lead to soil that is inadequately prepared for turf growth.

Naturally Occurring Stresses and Other Disturbances

Environmental: High temperatures, high humidity, and other unfavorable weather conditions.

Animals: Fecal and urine burn from pets.

Pests: Includes insects and weeds.

Shade: Most warm season turf does not do well in shaded areas.

Disruptive Use: Includes foot traffic, marks from sporting equipment and other heavy equipment.

IMPLEMENT A SOLUTION

If you determine that your lawn's problems are a result of improper management, reread the corresponding section(s) in this guide and correct the problem through proper management procedures. Proper maintenance prevents the majority of turfgrass problems. If you are still in doubt about the cause of the problem, call us directly or the county extension office.

Sometimes certain environmental concerns are beyond your control, while others have more easily implemented solutions. Here are a few potential problems and possible solutions.

Watering

More than 90% of turfgrass problems are due to improper watering practices. First, check your entire system at least twice a year for any problems. Brown, dry spots or areas that stay too wet are signs the sprinklers need to be adjusted or repaired. Change the watering frequencies seasonally.

Problem	Solution
Uneven spray coverage	Each sprinkler must spray water to the center of the adjacent sprinklers.
Leaking or broken sprinkler	Replace them with the same kind of heads. Do not mix sprinkler types within one area.
Clogged sprinklers	Remove heads and blow them out. Replace them if you can't unclog them.
Grass interfering with spray	Trim grass around the head; add a riser or raise the head.
Tilted sprinklers	Straighten to upright position.

Salt Accumulation

Salt buildup may occur due to the watering and evaporation cycle. Water contains salts, and it carries salts from the soil with it as it moves through the soil. Wherever the water stops, it deposits all those salts. Salt build up in the root zone can eventually cause leaf yellowing and slower growth. Leach salts from the soil two to three times each summer by irrigating twice as long as usual. Heavy summer rains might also leach the salts away.

Animals

People who have dogs sometimes have conflicts with turf damage resulting from fecal or urine burn. Fecal material can be picked up or your dog can be trained to use a certain area of the yard. Dog urine is more of a problem because it is high in concentrated nitrogen which turns the grass yellow, then brown and dead. The damaged spot is sometimes encircled by dark green turf because the "nitrogen effect" is diluted further out, acting as a fertilizer. Do not apply fertilizer to the area because it only adds more nitrogen.

There are a few suggestions for this problem. Fences can be used to keep neighborhood dogs from lawns, dog runs can be used in the back yard, or dogs can be trained to use only certain areas. Dietary modifications or nutritional supplements for dogs are available. To avoid potential harm, always consult your veterinarian before trying any dietary supplements. Keep plenty of fresh drinking water available so your dog's urine will be less concentrated.

Lightly watering the affected lawn area within eight hours after the dog has urinated will dilute the urine. This may also minimize the odor that attracts dogs since they tend to return to the same elimination areas (this may work for the front yard to discourage neighborhood dogs). When lawn burn is mild, warm season turfgrasses that spread stolons and rhizomes will often repair the damage through new growth. However, it is sometimes necessary to reseed or resod a patch of lawn. Reseeding would only occur with winter ryegrass, which is more sensitive to urine damage and has no regrowth ability.

Pests

Your lawn should, under proper maintenance and care, remain relatively pest-free. However, if pests such as insects, weeds, fungi, or any other questionable situation occurs call your county extension or our office to review your turf problem. The best insect and weed control is a healthy lawn.

Insects: At any given time insects can be found in a typical lawn, but rarely in large enough numbers to cause damage to a healthy lawn. Many insects are actually beneficial, part of the natural balance, and harmless to turfgrass. So don't get worried if you find a grub or two. If you find five to ten grubs in a square foot of soil, you might consider treatment. The goal is to keep damage at an aesthetically acceptable level that is not threatening the health of the grass. If your lawn is showing unacceptable levels of damage, look for insect pests above the soil, or dig into the soil and examine the top four to six inches. Determine how many insects are in a square foot area and identify the insect, or have a professional identify it for you. Only large populations may require treatment. Apply pesticides only as a last resort since they can harm beneficial insects.

Weeds: Identify the weed and select the right control. If practical, hand pulling is the first choice for removing most weeds before they

set seed. Use chemical herbicides ONLY on established turf that has roots 4–6 inches deep. Usually by the third mowing the roots are deep enough. Use only if needed. . . if you have more weeds than you can tolerate. Above all, follow the instructions on the label of any chemical that is recommended for safe and effective control. Weed and feed type products may affect bermudagrass roots and are NOT recommended.

Shade

Bermuda does not grow well in shade. Shade blocks sunlight that is necessary for proper plant growth. One alternative may be to plant St. Augustine which needs at least 30% sunlight to survive. Another may be to plant perennial ryegrass in October. If you mow higher and do not overfertilize, the ryegrass may last until August or later. Excessively shaded areas of bermudagrass lawns should be re-landscaped to either hardscapes or mulches. There is no sense in trying to grow bermuda in the shade.

Excessive Traffic

Physical injury to grass and soil compaction can result from excessive traffic. Different turfgrass species vary in their tolerance to wear. Excessive traffic compacts the soil. You may need to core aerate the soil. When finished, rake up the cores, mix them with sand, and use to topdress. It is a good idea to determine traffic patterns and choose the species appropriate for your intended use before planting a lawn. Turf is not the proper choice for high traffic dog runs; use bark or gravel. In high traffic areas raise the mowing height as well.

Seedheads

These are the series of small flowers that give the lawn an unfavorable appearance. All grasses produce seedheads; however, hybrid bermudagrass varieties produce no viable seeds. Expect bermuda to produce seedheads in late May to early June. Following a proper fertilizing and mowing program will usually reduce seedhead formation.



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