

Spring Lawn Calendar

Spring is a crucial time for warm season grasses like Bermudagrass, Buffalograss and Zoysia. For cool season grasses like Bluegrass, Fescue and Ryegrass, spring maintenance is limited. Certain weeds can also be controlled beginning in the spring but identification and knowledge of their life cycle is the key to getting complete control.

March

Warm-season grass: If you haven't already, March is the time to submit soil samples for cool season grasses. With the moisture we've had already this spring, make sure your soil is mostly dry when you take the sample. Walking on and digging up wet soil destroys soil structures. If you do take a sample that is wet, allow it to dry in a clean, open container. Microwaving, blow drying or baking soil samples can skew the results. For a lawn soil test, you will need to fill out a "Lawn Soil Test" sheet. This sheet is available on our website, www.shawnee.ksu.edu, or you can fill it out in our office. As you fill the sheet out, it is important to note what species of turf you'd like to grow, or what you're growing if you have an established lawn. We sometimes have clients put down "crabgrass" as the turf species, because it's what is growing in their yard at that time. When they get their test back the results are given for crabgrass instead of results for the species they're actually trying to grow, like Zoysia.

Cool-season grass: For cool season grasses, September is the best time to seed or overseed. If you still have thin or dead patches in your cool season grass, March and April are the second best times to seed.

Weeds: Avoid using a pre-emergence or broadleaf herbicide if you're seeding. Pre-emergence products should not be used until the newly seeded grass has been mowed three times. Broadleaf herbicides should be avoided for the four to six weeks *prior* to seeding your lawn. After seeding, broadleaf herbicides shouldn't be used until the lawn has been mowed three times, the same interval as pre-emergent.

April

Warm-season grass: When you get the results back for your warm season lawn soil test, April is the time to make the amendments recommended in the soil test. This may include an application of either lime or sulfur. This is also the time to grade and till you soil, if necessary.

Cool-season grasses: Second best time to seed or overseed.

Weeds: To control crabgrass, foxtail and other warm-season annual grasses, a pre-emergence product is applied in early spring. A good guide for crabgrass control is to have the product applied by the time redbud trees reach full-bloom. The date of April 15 is an approximate guide, but weather conditions vary from year to year. For these products soil temperatures need to reach 55 degrees Fahrenheit. To check soil temperatures in your area, utilize the Kansas Mesonet (<http://mesonet.k-state.edu/>).

May

Warm-season grass: May can be a time for early warm-season grass planting.

Cool-season grass: No maintenance recommended.

Weeds: Continue to mow lawns to control weeds before overseeding without applications of pre-emergence or broadleaf herbicides.

June

Warm-season grass: June is the month to seed or overseed warm-season grasses. It is also the time to apply a starter fertilizer or fertilizer as specified by your soil test. Before you seed, if the soil is dry, soak the lawn thoroughly about one week before you plan to seed. This gives the seed a water reservoir to pull from. If you have clay soils, this process should occur over several intervals to allow water to soak in, rather than run off the soil. Grass seed that germinates, and then is allowed to dry, may die. Make sure to keep the area moist but not soaking wet. Frequent, light irrigation is best.

Cool-season grass: No maintenance recommended.

Weeds: The best weed control is a healthy lawn that crowds out weeds. Focus first on properly timing lawn maintenance and providing adequate and appropriate water and fertilizer to your lawn to prevent weeds from becoming established.

For more information on weeds or lawns please visit www.shawnee.ksu.edu.