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ENVIRONMENTAL LAWN CARE CALENDAR
(cool-season species : fescue, bluegrass, ryegrass)

January – February

- Get Soil Tested, Apply Lime if Needed.
- Avoid Traffic on Frozen Lawns.
- Sharpen Your Lawnmower's Blade – a clean cut promotes grass health.

March

- Apply Lime if Needed.
- Start Mowing – don't cut below 2.5 inches.
- Sow Grass Seed. (Late August – early October is a better time)
- Aerify, Overseed if needed.
- Consider Using Pre-emergence Herbicide for Crabgrass and/or Post-emergence Broadleaf Herbicide for Chickweed, Dandelion, etc. Crabgrass begins to germinate when forsythia and dogwoods bloom. Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control. **Note: Check product label for planting restrictions before using a herbicide.**
- Fertilizer: Established Lawns Do Not Benefit From Nitrogen Applications in the Month of March.

April

- Finish Seeding, Aerification by April 15.
- Consider the Need for Pre and Post-emergence Herbicides (crabgrass begins to germinate when forsythia and dogwoods bloom). Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control. **Note: Check product label for planting restrictions before using a herbicide.**
- Fertilizer: Established Lawns Do Not Benefit From Nitrogen Applications in the Month of April.
- Grub Control Possible: July is More Effective Timing.

May

- Crabgrass is Germinating. Pre-emergence Herbicides are Still Effective, Particularly on Goosegrass. If Lepedeza or Other Summer Annuals Are Present, Consider Post-emergence Herbicides. Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control. **Note: Check product label for planting restrictions before using a herbicide.**
- Fertilizer: Apply ½ of a Pound of Actual Nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. Slow Release Nitrogen is Preferred. Apply After May 15.
- Sharpen Your Lawnmower's Blade. A Clean Cut Promotes Grass Health.

June

- For Lespedeza and Other Summer Broadleaf Weeds, Consider Using Post-Emergence Herbicides. Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control.
- Raise Your Lawnmower's Blade. Cut No Shorter Than 2.5 inches.
- If Wiregrass is a Problem, Now is the Time to Prepare For Control. Stop Mowing the Lawn and Let it Grow for One Month Before Treatment.

July

- Lawns Fertilized in March and April May Now Show Brown Patch Disease.
- Control Wiregrass with a 2% Glyphosate spray (note: lawn will require replanting).
- Mow as Needed.
- White Grubs are Hatching From Eggs Laid by Japanese Beetles. Control Them Now if There are More the 6-10 Grubs per Square Foot of Lawn.

August

- To Prepare for Planting, Have Soil Tested.
- Contact Extension Office for New List of Recommended Seeds.
- Sow Grass Seed after August 15.
- Aerify, Overseed After August 15.
- Finish Grub Treatments.
- Mow as Needed.
- Consider Pre-emergence Herbicide for Winter Annual Broadleaf Weeds. Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control. **Note: Check product label for planting restrictions before using a herbicide.**

September

- Sow Grass Seed.
- Aerify, Overseed.
- Water Lawns if Seed was Planted.
- Fertilizer: Established Lawns Will Benefit From Up To One Pound of Actual Nitrogen Per 1,000 Sq. Ft. Slow Release Nitrogen Preferred.
- Mow as Needed.

October

- Finish sowing Grass Seed by October 15.
- Aerify, Overseed by October 15.
- Water Lawns if Seed was Planted.
- Fertilizer: Same as September.
- Mow as Needed.
- Consider Post-emergence Herbicide for Dandelion, Henbit and Other Broadleaves. Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control. **Note: Check product label for planting restrictions before using a herbicide.**

November

- Too Late to Sow Grass Seed, Under Normal Weather Conditions.
- Fertilizer: Same as September if desired.
- Mow as Needed.
- Remove Leaves Dropped on Lawns. Use the Leaves as Mulch or Compost.

December

- Too Late to Fertilize.
- No Need to Mow, Under Normal Weather Conditions.
- Continue Leaf Removal.
- Avoid Traffic on Frozen Lawns.

Table 1. The amounts of various types of fertilizers required to apply certain rates of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.

Fertilizer Analysis	lbs. of nitrogen desired per 1,000 sq. ft.	
	½	1
6-2-0	8.3	16.6
10-10-10	5.0	10.0
12-4-8	4.1	8.3
16-4-8	3.1	6.2
20-0-16	2.5	5.0
23-3-7	2.1	4.3
28-0-12	1.8	3.6
31-0-0	1.6	3.2
33.5-0-0	1.5	3.0
38-0-0	1.3	2.6
46-0-0	1.1	2.2

Turfgrass Management Practices to Minimize Pollution of Water Resources

- Use slow-release nitrogen when possible.
- Apply water-soluble nitrogen in split application at reduced rates.
- Never apply more than 1 pound of soluble nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.
- Apply fertilizers as indicated by soil test.
- Do not spread fertilizer in a manner such that it falls on impervious surfaces.
- Maintain a buffer between fertilized areas and water features.
- Use conservative irrigation practices – Water to only slightly below the rooting depth.
- Apply nutrients at time of year best suited to turfgrass need.
- Return clippings when mowing and mow with the proper frequency.
- Increase mowing heights to allow better root growth.
- Properly identify pests and select pesticides with minimal non-target toxicity and mobility.
- Annual pesticide applications should not be needed! A thick, vigorous lawn is your best pest control.
- Calibrate equipment frequently and apply pesticides safely.
- Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM) by spot treating, using curative programs and establishing damage thresholds.

COMMENTS

- A high nitrogen fertilizer may be used if soil test phosphorus and potassium levels are Medium or Higher. Apply at the rate of up to 1lb. of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.
- Lime is periodically required for good turf growth. Apply only if soil test indicates it is needed. A typical application will last from 4 to 7 years.
- Avoid springtime fertilizer application! Fertilization at this time will excessively stimulate leaf growth, depleting food reserves in the roots. When warm weather hits, grasses depend on these reserves. If not there, stunting and die out may occur.
- This plan is for cool-season species such as bluegrass, ryegrass and fescue only. Do not follow this plan for bermuda grass or zoysia grass lawns!
- Seeding rates are as follows – KY Bluegrass, 2-3 LB per 1000 square feet; Tall Fescue, 4-6 LB per 1000 square feet; fine leaf fescue, 3-5 LB per 1000 square feet.
- Mowing height is important to maintain a dense sod. From spring through the hot summer months, a higher 2 ½" cutting height is desired since it will put turf under much less stress. In fall (September) a cutting height of 2" is desirable to increase the amount of light reaching the base of the plant, which stimulates new tiller development.
- Overseeding, if necessary, should be done in August-September. To be successful, seeds must come in contact with soil. This can best be done by first aerifying the lawn with a corer-type aerifier, and then broadcasting seed at the recommended rate. Fertilizer should not be applied from two weeks prior to seeding and for 4 weeks after seeding. This may cause omission of one of the three fertilizer application times but will help insure a successful stand.
- Watering will help maintain a viable lawn. During dry periods, application of 1" of water per week will assist turf growth. If overseeding, watering is essential. If seed germinates and is then allowed to dry out, the viable living plant will desiccate (die).
- Spot treatment of weeds in the spring and summer, as they occur, may be done using a hand-held broadleaf weed sprayer complete with herbicide, which is available at most lawn and garden centers or department stores.
- Insect control may be needed if grubs are a problem. Use a recommended insecticide being careful to follow the directions on the label.

Questions? Call the Bedford Extension Master Gardener Help Desk: 586-7675 or email us at Bedfordmg@vt.edu