



# HOME & GARDEN

Home and Garden information center • 12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 1-800-342-2507

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## Lawn Tips

### Culture

- Mid-August through mid-October is the best time to start new lawns and renovate or overseed existing lawns. For best results use a turf-type tall fescue cultivar at a rate of 4 lbs. of seed per 1,000 sq. ft. of area for overseeding, or 8 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. for new lawns. If your lawn area contains more than 50% weeds, consider a total lawn renovation. Newly seeded turf must be watered regularly. See HG 102, Lawn Establishment, Renovation, and Overseeding.
- Hot, dry weather will cause lawns to turn brown and go dormant. This is a natural response that helps turfgrass survive severe drought. Unless large amounts of water are routinely used, watering lawns will not reverse this process. The exception would be areas of very young grass that you seeded this spring. Keep it watered because it may not be established enough to go through dormancy. To reduce diseases don't water a lawn at night. Lawns that go dormant will green-up and grow vigorously again in the fall. The first areas to go dormant from the heat are south facing slopes and areas with thin top soil. Stay off dormant turf to prevent damage to the crowns.
- Mow 'em high and let 'em lie. Cut your cool-season turf (fescues and bluegrass) to a height of 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 inches and leave the clippings on the lawn where they will decompose naturally. Mow zoysia grass and Bermuda grass to a height of 3/4 inch to 1-1/2 inches.
- Grasscycling does not lead to thatch build-up problems. Mowing high is the best defense to help lawns survive drought and prevent the invasion of broadleaf weeds.
- Always keep your lawn mower blade sharp. Dull blades tear turfgrass and can lead to disease problems.
- Fertilize Bermuda grass and zoysia grass no later than mid-August with one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. This is equivalent to 10 lbs. of a 10-6-4 fertilizer. Do not fertilize cool-season grasses until September because fertilizer applications during the summer months may cause undue stress.
- Crabgrass is forming seed heads at this time. It's too late to apply post-emergent crabgrass herbicides. Control severe crabgrass problems next spring through the use of pre-emergent herbicides. Over-seeding your lawn this fall to thicken the turf will also help combat crabgrass next year.
- Broadleaf weeds, like clover, ground ivy and wild strawberry, are growing vigorously and can be effectively controlled with spot applications of labeled herbicides. Weeds need to be actively growing for the herbicide to be most effective. During periods of heat and dryness, its best to wait until there is rain to stimulate the weeds growth. Remember that lawn herbicides can damage or kill non-target plants and animals if used incorrectly.
- This is a good time to begin controlling perennial grass weeds such as wild Bermudagrass, and nimblewill. Spray the turf with a non-selective herbicide ( i.e. containing Glyphosate) to kill the weeds and turf. Reseed the treated area in September.
- Disease
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- Brown patch is a common fungal disease of tall fescue lawns that appears as thin, brown areas. Grasses will green up and recover in the fall. No chemical controls are recommended. This disease is typically worse on over-fertilized and irrigated lawns.

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- Summer patch and dollar spot may be seen now on bluegrass. No fungicide sprays are recommended once the disease has already started. Control thatch and soil compaction, maintain fertility by applying fertilizer in the fall, and overseed with resistant cultivars.

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