



Bucks Country Gardens

Lawn Care For Fall: Why Fall Plays A Major Role For Spring Lawns

FALL IS FOR PLANTING

How many times have you heard this important statement?

Fall is the best time for planting – trees love it, shrubs love it, bulbs love it – and so do lawns! When it comes to lawns, however, fall has become the preferred season to seed and establish a new lawn or to upgrade an existing lawn. Whether you re-seed or reconstruct a damaged lawn, fall's cooler nights and shorter days make perfect growing conditions for all types of lawn care.

The following paragraphs are basic guidelines for weed controls, seeding (or re-seeding), plus it will review the importance of two (2) fall feedings. Please read on.

WEED CONTROL

If you had severe weed problems throughout the season or weren't able to apply weed controls in the spring, use this opportunity to rid your lawn of weeds and still have time for reseeding before winter.

Any post-emergent weed control may safely be applied during September and early October, depending on weather conditions, to control the weeds that have been apparent throughout your lawn. Refer to our "GUIDELINES FOR LAWN CARE" information sheet if you aren't quite sure which product to use or call us if you need help identifying the weeds that bother your lawn.

You may apply grass seed two weeks AFTER the lawn has been treated with weed control products.

GRASS SEED and Application Techniques

Choosing the right grass seed is an important step in achieving the "perfect" lawn. No "one" grass seed will work for all lawn conditions. We recommend selecting the grass seed for each specific area you will be covering – that is, sunny areas, shady areas, moisture retention in the area (wet or dry), heavy wear-n-tear traffic area, etc.

OVER-SEEDING AND UPGRADING ESTABLISHED LAWNS

If you plan to over-seed large areas of your established lawn we suggest (and highly recommend) renting an "aerator" (or cross-cutter) to loosen the soil which has become compacted and to help rid of thatch that has accumulated (from decaying grass clippings, leaves, etc.) This allows oxygen to get into the soil and allows it to breathe, thus gives the new grass seed a desirable soil to establish itself quickly.

SEEDING A NEW LAWN

There are several factors that determine if you are seeding a new lawn:

Less than 50% of your lawn is covered by grass from installing a new lawn in the spring or the after-effects of the use of weed controls or if you recently re-graded your property and starting from scratch. If any of these reasons fit your situation – read on.

Select your grass seed (as discussed above,) and follow our “SEEDING RATES AND SPREADER SETTING GUIDELINES” information sheet. Cover the area lightly with straw to prevent erosion of seed and to help retain moisture. The straw may be removed after the first few cutting (when blade leaves are 3 inches high and shows signs of establishment) – or – leave the straw on until next spring. Allow it to decompose during the winter – rake up any excess that has not decomposed (to prevent thatch.)

A LOW-NITROGEN, HIGH PHOSPHEROUS FERTILIZER MUST BE USED when any seeding is performed. (i.e. 5-10-5 fertilizer is equivalent to 5 parts nitrogen, 10 parts potash.) Phosphorous is the key nutrient for establishing a strong root system.

FALL FERTILIZERS Are Key To Any Successful Lawn!

Fertilizing is an important step in growth of any tree, shrub, garden – or lawn! There are two (2) important feedings that will take place during the fall: The first fall application is on or about Labor Day (beginning to mid-September,) the second lawn feeding will be around Thanksgiving (mid to late-November.) The first application consists of a high nitrogen fertilizer, which will add the rich color back into your lawn after the stress of summer’s heat. The second will be high phosphorous to encourage root development for the purpose of storing valuable nutrients through the winter – then to be used early next spring. This second application of fertilizer is THE MOST IMPORTANT FEEDING OF THE YEAR – it will help guarantee you a lush, dense green lawn next spring.

WHEN CHOOSING A FERTILIZER: Remember, high nitrogen content promotes the top, leavy growth of the grass blades; high phosphorous fertilizers encourage root growth. Please ask us to recommend one of our quality fertilizers for your lawn’s needs.

LIME For Your Lawn

If you have noticed an abundance of weeds re-occurring in your lawn each year, this means your lawn may require lime. Lime performs many duties in your lawn: it supplies calcium and magnesium (nutrients needed for growth,) corrects soil acidity, makes phosphorous more readily available, speeds up the rotting of dead plant material in the soil and reduces leaching of potassium by the rain.

Lime is available to the homeowner in three common varieties: Pelletized – the quickest way to get lime into your soil; Pulverized – not as quick as pelletized, but still very effective; and Granular – a slow release lime application. For further information about lime and it’s effect in your soil’s PH levels, please refer to our “LIME – How It Affects your Soil ph” informational handout located in our Information Center.

INSECT CONTROLS

Fall is also an important time for insect control applications. If you had Japanese beetles, for example, visiting your property and making a feast on your trees and shrubs, then you will definitely have grubs in your lawn. (Believe it or not!) There are several products on the market today that will control these insects this fall as they feed beneath the surface of your lawn – causing possible major damage next spring.

August – early September:

Oftanol – This application will penetrate through the blade leaves and roots and kill the grubs as they ingest on your grass.

September:

Dursban or Diazinon – ingested by the grubs

October – November:

Dylox - quick kill formula that is absorbed through the grubs skin

For a more detailed insect control program on grubs and other lawn-feeding insects stop in and ask our Lawn Department at Bucks Country Gardens. If an insect problem persists in your lawn cut a small sample and bring it in for a free analysis.

We offer many fine-reading materials to guide you in building a successful lawn. These books will guide you throughout the year with important information and guidance to solutions of some of the most common lawn problems. Stop in today!!