



Remember This Stuff?



Perform These Simple Steps Now While It's still Warm, To Get Ready for the Cold.

- 1. Clean out your gutters
- 2. Drain your external faucets
- 3. Caulk doors and windows
- 4. Repair roof shingles
- 5. Flush your hot water heater
- 6. Replace your furnace filters

"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

-Albert Camus

Ready for Frost?

If a frost is predicted, cover your plants, both to retain as much soil heat and moisture as possible and to protect them against strong winds, which can hasten drying and cooling. You can use newspapers, baskets, tarps, straw, and other materials to cover your plants. Cover the whole plant before sunset to trap any remaining heat. Be sure to anchor lightweight coverings to prevent them from blowing away. Keep the soil moist by watering your plants the day a frost is predicted. Commercial fruit and vegetable growers leave sprinklers on all night to cover plants with water. As the water freezes, it releases heat, protecting the plants, even though they're covered by ice. To prevent damage, the sprinklers need to run continuously as long as temperatures remain below freezing.

Here Comes AUTUMN!

Contrary to popular opinion, fall is the best time of the year for lawn care. Fertilization, weed and thatch control, establishment of new lawns, and renovation of poor quality lawns should be done over the next few weeks.

The best time of the year to fertilize your lawn is early fall. For a moderate quality lawn, apply fertilizer May Day and Labor Day. High quality lawns should be fertilized May Day, Labor Day and Halloween. Very high quality lawns that are watered all summer may also be fertilized around Father's Day. Top quality lawn fertilizers contain slow-release or controlled-release nitrogen. Look on the label for slow-release forms such as ureaform, sulfur-coated urea, milorganite, and IBDU. These forms stimulate uniform growth over a period of time and are less likely to burn the grass. However, do not expect the quick green up caused by fast-release forms. Slow-release formulations are more costly but worth the price for the improved health of your lawn.

In early fall use a regular lawn fertilizer with N-P-K ratios of 3:1:2 or 4:1:2. For example, a bag may list 21-7-14 or 32-8-16. Amounts don't need to be exact but should be similar to the suggested ratios. Hold

off on applying "winterizer" fertilizers until late October or early November.

Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass lawns in sun should receive 1 to 4 pounds per 1000 square feet of actual nitrogen every year. A rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet is recommended for each fertilizer application. Lawns and other plants in shade grow slower and don't need as much nitrogen as plants in full sun. Therefore, shady lawns should be fertilized at half the recommended rate.

A little math will show you how much fertilizer you need to put on the lawn to get 1 pound per 1000 square feet. Divide 1 by the first number in decimal form (percent of nitrogen) on the fertilizer bag. Multiply that by the square footage of your lawn, then divide by 1000. The answer will give you the total pounds of fertilizer you need to apply to the lawn. Here's an example: you have 15-5-10 fertilizer and a 7000 square foot lawn. One divided by 0.15 equals 6.7. Multiply 6.7 by 7000 for 46,900. Then divide by 1000 for the answer of 46.9 or 47 pounds. So you would need to put 47 pounds of 15-5-10 spread over the entire lawn to properly fertilize it. September and October are the best months to control perennial broadleaf weeds like dandelions and clover. In autumn the weeds prepare for winter by pulling nutrients and starches from their leaves into their roots. By doing this, they also draw herbicides into their root systems, thus more effectively killing the weed. Actively growing grass will quickly fill in the bare spots created after the weeds die. Thatch is a build-up of living and dead grass roots and stems between the soil and green grass blades. The amount of thatch in the lawn may be checked by cutting three to four inches down into the grass with a shovel and lifting up a piece of sod. Thatch looks like a thick tangle of dark brown roots above the soil level. If thatch is greater than 1/2 inch, the lawn should be core aerated or dethatched in fall or spring. In lawns with a thatch layer over 3/4 inch thick you should aerate then topdress with a thin layer (1/8 to 1/4 inch) of soil or compost. Topdressing adds microorganisms that help breakdown thatch.

