

PREFER TO RECEIVE A HARD COPY OF OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER?

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What we are doing this month and why

This month we will begin to apply our fall/winter fertilizer formula which contains potassium. Potassium encourages root growth which enables the grass to store carbohydrates for next spring when it comes out of dormancy. We are also continuing to apply pre-emergent weed control to suppress winter weeds. We will apply pre-emergent weed control throughout the year to keep constant pressure on weed populations. We are also applying post emergent weed control to control actively growing weeds.

We continue to see some sodwebworm activity and will continue to apply insecticide with our treatments until the weather cools down enough so that sod web worms are inactive. Disease has not been a big issue so far this year due to the overall moderate levels of rain and high temperatures. We will apply fungicide as needed when we notice disease activity occurring. Mole crickets remain active and we will treat mole crickets as needed when they are present.

SHOULD YOU SCALP YOUR LAWN AT THE END OF THE GROWING SEASON BY CUTTING IT REALLY SHORT?

The growth of the grass is now slowing considerably and it will be going dormant when temperatures get below freezing. Is scalping the lawn a good thing to do to prepare it for winter?

With warm season turf grasses, there is no need to cut the lawn any shorter than normal at the end of the growing season. Until the lawn goes completely dormant and turns brown, the grass blades are still going to photosynthesize the sunlight to produce energy for the lawn. Cutting the it short would just reduce that ability.

Also, after the lawn goes dormant, the brown grass blades will still help the lawn by buffering the runners from ware and freezing temperatures through the winter so they will be healthy and produce new grass blades next spring. So no, it's not a good idea to cut your lawn extra short for the off season.

WHAT ARE THESE WEBS IN MY TREE?

Sometimes you may notice a web high up in one of your trees. What are they and are they harmful to the tree? These are created by "tent caterpillars". Tent caterpillars are larval form of a moth that spins a protective web in trees, uses the tree leaves for food until it transforms into a moth and flies away. Tent caterpillars are temporary, seasonal pests and do relatively little damage to trees. Treatments are not effective on them because their "tent" protects them from any pesticides applied to the tree. Consequently, treatment is not recommended.

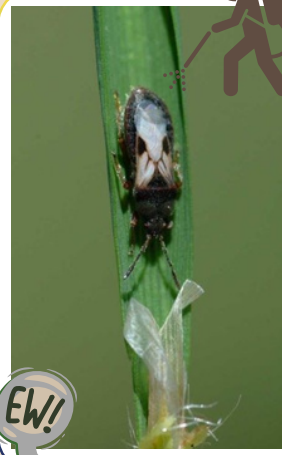


WHY ST. AUGUSTINE IS NO LONGER A PREMIUM GRASS

At one time in the Florida panhandle, St. Augustine grass was considered a "premium" grass. It was widely held to be an upgrade over a centipede lawn because it supposedly had fewer problems.

Not so any more!

In recent years St. Augustine has become the "problem child" among grass types. Here's why.



Sod web worms

Although sod web worms affect other types of grass, for the last few years they have been particularly active in newly planted St. Augustine requiring some people to replace some or all of their newly planted St. Augustine within a year.

Disease

St. Augustine is particularly susceptible to two different diseases of turf grass, brown patch and grey leaf spot. Brown patch is particularly active during spring and fall when the temperatures are cool. It creates brown rings of dying grass in the yard that grow outward as it moves through the yard. Grey leaf spot creates lesions on the grass blades during the summer that gives the lawn dull sickly appearance.

Chinch bugs

Chinch bugs are an insect that feeds specifically on St. Augustine grass. Although there have been attempts made at producing a strain of St. Augustine that is resistant to chinch bugs, they have failed by and large. On the other hand, chinch bugs have started to become resistant to insecticide treatments making them harder and harder to control.

For these reasons

I NO LONGER RECOMMEND ST. AUGUSTINE FOR LAWNS.

If you require shade tolerance, zoysia is just as shade tolerant as St. Augustine and is a better over all grass.

Watering Instructions

At the time of this writing, forecasted temperatures are in the high 80s with lows in the mid 60 and sporadic rain. Under these conditions, we are advising watering 3 to 4 times a week. As the temperature cools, grass needs less water because it's not growing and it's losing less moisture into the atmosphere.

The ideal time of day to water is in the early morning hours, while the dew is still on the ground. This is generally **between midnight and 8 AM**. The advantage of watering during this time is

- 1. You are not extending the number of hours during the day the grass is wet there by encouraging disease activity.**
- 2. Less water is lost to evaporation.**
- 3. There is less wind during the night to blow the spray pattern off target.**

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