



Father and Son Pest and Lawn Solutions NEWSLETTER

February 2025

WATERING INSTRUCTIONS

Cooler temperatures combined with the shorter days this time of year greatly reduced water requirements for grass. Therefore we recommend shutting off irrigation systems now until next spring. Allowing the system to continue to run through the winter is unnecessary and increases the likelihood of disease activity. Depending on the weather, sometime in March is usually the time to start watering again.



What we are doing this month and why.

This month we will continue applying our fall/winter season fertilizer formula which contains potassium. **Potassium** encourages the grass to store carbohydrates in its root system. This stored energy will be used next spring when it comes out of dormancy. We are also continuing to apply **pre-emergent weed control** to suppress 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.

Mole crickets are the only turf destroying insect that remains active through the winter. However, the colder it gets the less active they become. We will treat them as needed.

Disease is most active between 70° and 80°. We are fluctuating back and forth around that temperature window so we will keep a close eye out for disease activity and apply **fungicide** as needed when we notice disease activity occurring.

WHAT EFFECT WILL THE SNOW HAVE ON LAWNS THIS SPRING?

A week ago we had a historic snowfall all along the Emerald Coast. The ground stayed blanketed with snow for 2-3 days and now, 6 days later, the last of the snow has finally melted away. What effect will this have on awns? I'm afraid I can't speak from experience, because in the 35+ years I've been in the lawn care business, I've never experienced anything like this! However, I do see some clues that may give an indication of what impact the snow had on lawns. Looking at my own lawn, I am surprised to still see some green grass blades after the snow melted away. That seems to indicate the snow actually insulated the grass from the coldest temperatures we had when it got down into the teens. Grass exposed to air temperatures in the teens will turn completely brown. This insulating factor is good news, especially for centipede lawns, because centipede is the one grass most susceptible to freeze damage. So in my opinion, the snow will have no negative effects on grass and may have saved some lawns from winter kill due to freeze damage.



WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY FREEZE DAMAGED PALMS?

We recently saw temperatures get down into the teens. Many types of palm trees that we have in this area are not native and do not tolerate hard freezes well. These palms include Canary Isle date palms, Sylvester Palms, Washingtonia palms, and even sago palms. The best thing to do with freeze damaged palms at this time is... nothing. There will usually be some green left on freeze damaged fronds and the tree can still receive energy from those fronds that still have green on them. If the fronds are completely brown, they can be trimmed off. Once the high temperature stays consistently above 80, apply palm fertilizer around the base of the palm about a foot away from the trunk once a month until high temperatures fall below 80 again in the fall. The fertilizer will encourage the tree to produce new growth to replace the freeze damaged fronds. Leave the freeze damaged fronds on the tree as long as there is green in them.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY FREEZE DAMAGED PLANTS?

Cut out damaged plant material in spring on woody plants after there is no more chance of another freeze. You can tell what stems are dead by scratching the bark in late winter. If the material is green underneath, the tissue is still alive. They will lose their leaves due to the freeze experience, but will usually leaf out again in spring. Keep the plants moist and apply a light fertilizer after all danger of frost has passed. More tender plants will end up like perennials will have some damage to the root. As with woody plants, wait until spring to trim back dead above ground tissue. In the spring, you will be able to tell what parts of the plant survived by the new growth coming up from the root stock.



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