

Spring Lawn Tips

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Fescue lawns in Kentucky can struggle by the end of the summer with drought, disease, and even insect problems. Often our fescue lawns are thin and needing some nitrogen by the time fall arrives. September and October are the best times to over seed and fertilize your lawn but some maintenance practices can be done in the spring.

Seeding in the spring is not the best but sometimes we need to over seed for various reasons. New spring seedlings typically do not have enough time to develop a strong root system before the hot summer arrives. If you do need to seed in the spring, do it as early as the weather allows. Make sure you get good seed to soil contact by using a slit seeder or aerify the lawn before

broadcast seeding. Aerifying opens up small holes that allows the seed to contact the soil. Aerification also helps open up the soil allowing air in the profile. Realize that some of your newly seeded fescue most likely will not survive the summer, depending on the year.

Weed control is probably the most important task you can do for you lawn. There are two major categories of weeds; broadleaf weeds (dandelions, clover, and henbit) and grassy weeds (crabgrass, goose grass). The majority of broadleaf weeds are controlled post-emergently- after they germinate. Grassy weeds are best controlled pre-emergently- before they germinate. This spring is the best time to apply a pre-emergent for those grassy weeds. Most lawn and garden supply stores will carry a decent product available to the home owner. Often, pre-emergent is combined with fertilizer and easy to apply using a broadcast spreader. The success of your pre-emergent depends on accurate application so make sure not to miss areas.

Best practices tell us to fertilize in the fall but, for higher maintained lawns, a little nitrogen in the early spring can provide some benefits. If you choose to apply some nitrogen, apply it early to mid-March and be careful not to apply too much. Fescue lawns are lush and typically growing fast in the spring and will need very little encouragement.

Spring lawn care can be challenging with the spring rains and cooler temperatures. When applying products, ensure you read directions and application rates before application. Make sure to wear proper protective equipment when applying herbicides such as gloves, long sleeve shirt, and long pants. Weed control depends on proper application and your health and the environment will thank you.