

Timely Turf Tips

August 2018

Time for some lawn TLC. Last month finished a little dry, but the latest rains have improved the growth in the backyard. Consider a little lawn maintenance this time of year. Core aeration, fall fertilizing, and reseeding are great methods for improving the lawn now and for future years. Check out the University of Minnesota Extension Minnesota lawn care calendar at <https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/lawn-care-calendar> for what to do and the best time to do it.

August lawn and garden tips:

- Last month we recommended keeping grass 3 to 3 ½ inches tall with regular mowing. This is still true until more moisture becomes available as fall approaches. Remember that gradually lowering cutting height (think 1/2 inch increments or one notch change at a time per mowing) is best for the grass.
- Mid-August is the best time to seed new lawn, overseed, patch bare spots, and install sod. There isn't as much competition with weed seed in the fall and longer, cooler nights make it easier for grass to become established. For best results, do it before September 20. Remember to apply a starter fertilizer before the seed/sod. See the folks at the mill for information about soil sampling now so that you know the proper amount of fertilizer to add when preparing the area. If your area to seed is large, ask about renting our Hydroseeder to make a big job easier.
- Core aerate mid-August to lessen soil compaction and allow better penetration of moisture to the root zone. Excess thatch should be reduced also as more oxygen is available to organisms that breakdown the thatch, including earthworms.
- If you fertilize only once per year (low maintenance), then late August is the time to do it. Apply your fall fertilizer at a rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet. We recommend Hugo Feed Mill's brand 25-0-15, with slow-release nitrogen for a longer feeding period. A 40# bag covers 10,000 square feet and there is a coupon attached below.
- If your iris patch is 3-4 years old and not looking as healthy as before, divide them early this month. The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum recommends using a spading fork to dig up the old plants, removing the oldest portions and replanting the new firm rhizomes from the outer portion of the mass. Add compost, peat moss, cow manure and some starter fertilizer to the bed. Trim the leaves of the plants back to 6", and plant just below ground level watering in well.
- Continue to maintain the garden. Regular watering, weeding and harvesting (or removing faded flowers in the flower garden) will keep gardens productive through early autumn or later. Dispose of any overripe produce, which can attract wasps and picnic beetles to the garden. Consider donating extra garden produce to local food shelves. For additional information, check out the U of MN Extension Yard and Garden News article "August To-Do List for Vegetable Gardening" located at blog-yard-garden-news.extension.umn.edu/2018/07/august-to-do-list-for-vegetable.html.



Plant a tree. The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum states, "Late summer is a great time to plant evergreen trees and shrubs." Remember to water evergreens regularly all fall, continuing until the ground freezes for best results.

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