

Timely Turf

Tips

August 2021



Not much relief for the dry conditions yet, so remember to consistently water lawns and gardens (1 inch per week), especially your container gardens. Having a uniform supply of moisture is important for all plants, but it is especially important for tomatoes, peppers, and squash. These vegetables are susceptible to blossom end rot, a disease that leads to the deterioration of the fruit end. When soil moisture levels vary greatly (too wet-too dry), the plants have problems absorbing enough calcium to prevent the disease. Lawn maintenance is important this time of year. 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Thinking of trying late season vegetables? Check this U of M Extension link for information on days to maturity and cold hardiness for various early-maturing vegetables: www.extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/planting-vegetables-midsummer-fall-harvest/



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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