

# AUGUST LANDSCAPE GARDENER

by

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Late summer is the best time to rejuvenate lawns, the process of filling in bare spots and replacing poorly performing grasses with better varieties starts now. Poor grasses or spots of “warm season” grasses can be eliminated easily with a non-selective herbicide (Roundup) 2-4 weeks prior to reseeding. This time frame will allow you to see the spots die before reseeding. In an emergency you can spray Roundup and reseed three days later, but you may not have entirely killed off the unwanted grasses and they may return. Spraying 2-4 weeks ahead will give you the opportunity to evaluate your treatment and re-spray if needed.

The preferred grass seed to use in our area for most lawns is a turf type tall fescue blend. (TTTF). TTTF germinates best at soil temperatures between 60 and 80 degrees, which occur in our area from mid August through the end of September. Seeding during that time (provided adequate moisture is present) will provide for germination in as short as 5 days with an average time of 7-10 days. Seeding early will get a stand of grass established prior to leaf clean up in the Fall. If moisture is not present, wait until adequate rainfall has occurred prior to seeding. (Adequate soil moisture will also allow for better penetration of aerator tines into the soil).

Seeding may be done in many ways. The primary objective is to establish seed contact with the soil particles. Aeration prior to seeding provides additional benefits of allowing for improved penetration of fertilizer and water to the root systems of the existing grass plants while opening areas for new seed to contact soil. Slice seeding, using a special machine, cuts very shallow grooves for the seed through the existing turf. This is the preferred method for obtaining the best stand of grass in the shortest time, but is also the slowest and most expensive. Broadcasting seed without aeration can work if we get a week of wet weather after seeding, but is very hit or miss. Watering the new seeding is very important for the first two weeks. Daily watering is extremely beneficial and can mean the difference between success and failure of the seeding job. Watering should

be gradually withdrawn as the grass grows, watering more at each watering and applying water less frequently.

Application of fertilizer designed for use with new seed such as 18-24-12 the first week of September will stimulate the existing turf and support the growth of young grass plants. This timing is important for the fertilizer whether you seed earlier or later.

Plan now for Fall plantings of ornamentals, Fall planted trees and shrubs produce roots during the long period of Fall through next Summer and are better able to withstand the Summer's temperatures. You might also begin planning for the division of perennials in your garden. Later September through early October is an ideal time for all but the most early flowering perennials.

Pruning should be delayed until mid-October. Pruning now will encourage growth which will not have sufficient time to harden off prior to freezing weather.

Weed control in plant beds now will eliminate possible sources of weed seed for next year, With a combination of hand weeding, where weed growth is too large or too close to desirable plants, and herbicides your yard can be weed free in no time. (Well almost.) Application of a pre-emergent herbicide, in planting beds only, in August, will keep weeds such as the chickweed invasion of this past Spring from being nearly so severe. This material is the same as you use in the Spring to prevent crabgrass and other Summer weeds from germinating. Do not use pre-emergents on lawn areas at this time if you plan to re-seed- only in the planting beds.

Lacebug on azalea and other broadleaf evergreen plants are into their second/third generations. The first generation left behind eggs which sporadically generate young over a wide range of time. Control is difficult with contact pesticides, so you may want to try Merit as a soil drench for long term control. The down side of Merit is the expense. Hemlock wooly adelgid produces a waxy white coating for its protection. Found almost exclusively on Hemlocks and in greater numbers, control is needed in the early stages of this pest whenever any are found. An application of Merit

to the soil for uptake by the roots will take care of these for about three years- don't forget to re-check..

Have a great vacation!

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