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# Lawn Care Programs

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service

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# LAWN CARE CALENDAR

## MARCH

**SEEDING:** Seed sown any time between Thanksgiving and spring will germinate as soil warms up.

**FERTILIZING:** Use a fertilizer high in nitrogen, low in phosphorous and medium in potassium. Apply at a rate of 1 lb. actual N per 1,000 sq. ft. (more if slow release). Fertilize in early spring, in early summer, and again in early fall. Granules can be spread over dry turf, but water in if area is heavily used.

**HEAVED CROWNS, BARE SPOTS:** Overseed the lawn as early as possible using 1 lb. seed per 1,000 sq. ft. Roll the lawn in early March to keep crowns from drying out. Rolling before spring rains is better than after.

**CRABGRASS PREVENTION:** Better to apply crabgrass preventer after desired grass starts active growth. See April recommendations.

**WILD ONION CONTROL:** Use liquid 2,4-D plus Dicamba, or waxbar of 2,4-D. Apply in early March to kill growing stems and soft bulbs. Repeat the following year for complete eradication.

**BROWN LEAFTIPS:** Due to winter drying. Set mower lower than normal and mow off brown tips, thus exposing the green grass earlier. For Zoysia grass, thatch and brown tips may be burned off, but keep a broom ready to prevent unwanted spread of fire.

## APRIL

**FERTILIZING:** As needed. See March recommendations.

**MOWING:** For bluegrass and fescue, set mower at 2-inch cutting height. Mow often enough to remove less than 1/2 the leaf. Remove clippings if desired. For Zoysia, bent and bermudagrass, set mower at less than 1-inch.

**HEAVED CROWNS:** If a problem, see March.

**CRABGRASS PREVENTION:** Spreading uniformly and following label directions, use either Betasan, Balan, Azak, Tupersan, Dacthal, Bandane or Chlordane on established turf. On new lawns Tupersan can be applied at time of seeding. It is selective.

**WILD ONION:** Getting rather late. See March.

**LEAFSPOT:** If it develops, an application of turf fungicide, used according to label, will reduce severity.

**SOIL INSECTS AND MOLES:** Dieldrin, Aldrin, Chlordane, Baylox, etc., will kill grubs in soil, thus starving any moles. These insecticides also control ants, wireworm, cicada killers and wasps. Read the label!

## MAY

**FERTILIZING:** Make second fertilizer application any time between May and July. See March.

**CRABGRASS PREVENTION:** Can still apply crabgrass preventers in some areas of Indiana. See April.

**BROADLEAF WEEDS:** Control dandelions, plantain, buckhorn, shepherd's purse and others with 2,4-D sprays, granulars, or waxbars. Standard application rate is 1 lb. active ingredients per acre.

**KNOTWEED, CLOVER, CHICKWEED:** Use Dicamba. Standard rate is 1/4 to 1/2 lb. active ingredient per acre. If Dicamba and 2,4-D are formulated together, use less of each.

**LEAFSPOT:** May develop into "fading out" with severe loss. Common bluegrass more susceptible. Changes in weather to dry, clear periods often reduce damage. Use turf fungicide according to label directions. Repeat in 10 to 14 days.

**SOD WEBWORM:** Kill larvae of the first brood in mid-May with insecticides such as Dylox, Dieldrin or Spectracide. Read the label!

## JUNE AND JULY

**WATERING:** Be ready to water if dry weather comes. Traveling sprinklers with automatic cutoffs save time and water.

**CLIPPINGS:** May be removed if excessive, but replace removed nutrients by extra fertilizing.

**CRABGRASS, FOXTAIL, BARNYARDGRASS, SEDGE, GOOSEGRASS:** Can be killed with 2 or 3 treatments of organic arsenicals (DSMA or AMA) at 5-day intervals. Keep soil moist during treatment period. If weather is hot, reduce application rate, but stay on the 5-day spray schedule. Carefully read and follow label directions.

**CHIGGERS:** Spray or dust with Malathion, Dieldrin or Lindane. Can re-treat for other insects, including sod webworm at the same time.

## AUGUST

**WATERING:** Supplement early fall rains to keep existing leaves.

**SEEDING NEW LAWNS:** Early fall is best time. If possible, seed and keep moist until established. If necessary, seed into dust and wait for rains to bring germination later in the fall.

**RUST:** With Merion, Windsor and some varieties, rust pustules on leaves can severely weaken turf. Fertilize and water to force new growth. If severe, treat with a fungicide such as Dithane as directed on label.

## SEPTEMBER

**FERTILIZING:** Fertilize to force fall recovery. See March. Water in for prompt response.

**WATERING:** As needed to force grass recovery during fall.

**VERTICAL THINNING:** Machine removal of thatch and matted grass provides room for new growth and reduces competition for space.

**RESEEDING:** Where needed use a blend of seed of improved varieties. Spread seed, than rake and water to get seed into the soil surface.

**DANDELION:** Use 2,4-D sprays, granules or waxbars at suggested medium rates in warm weather periods for best-time-of-year treatment.

**MILDEW:** Most likely to show up in shade, especially on Merion. Use Karathane if damage is serious.

**SOIL INSECTS:** If a problem, see April-July recommendations. Control now to ward off trouble next year.

## OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

**FERTILIZING:** A late fall feeding can maintain green color long into winter and promote early spring recovery. See March.

**LEAVES:** Rake tree leaves to keep them from matting turf and smothering grass.

**CHICKWEED:** May germinate in thin turf. See May.

**WILD ONION:** If present, spot-treat with liquid 2-4-D.

**LEAFSPOT:** Can become serious on weak susceptible varieties. See May.