

A Year in the Life of a Burke County Lawn

January- The lawn is still sleeping but a soil test could be done and mailed in while the turnaround time is relatively short. Can kill winter annuals (chickweed, henbit, etc.) with a broadleaf herbicide such as *Weed B Gon Max*

February- Time to fertilize. Slow-release lawn fertilizer is the best but 10-10-10 is acceptable as long as you apply no more than 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square ft. This is important because of brown patch issues. Can still treat broadleaf winter annuals. **Please don't use weed and feed products!**

March- Time to apply crabgrass preventer. It must be applied before the crabgrass germinates. When is that? Well, crabgrass germinates when the soil temperature reaches 55 degrees. Forsythia also starts blooming when soil temps reach 55 degrees. So, get your crabgrass preventer out before the forsythia blooms. It lasts for about 90 days so you might have to come back and reapply for good suppression of crabgrass. Treat wild onion and garlic for the first time this month using a product containing 2,4-D. Unlike most weeds, mowing wild onions or garlic just before applying the herbicide increases the effectiveness of the spray. **Do not plant grass!**

April- Grass is up and growing and should be mown by taking no more than one-third the height of the grass blade. Fescue should be cut no shorter than 3-3 1/2 inches. Broadleaf weeds should be starting to show themselves. Identify the weed, and buy a product that is listed for that particular weed. Liquids work much better than granular products. Spray when temps are between 55 degrees and 90 degrees and when rain is not expected for 24 hours. **Do not plant grass!**

May- Continue to mow grass, taking no more than one-third off the blade per mowing. Bagging and raking are not necessary. Grass clippings are 85% water and disappear quickly, providing nitrogen and organic matter to the lawn. **Do not fertilize. Do not plant grass!**

June- Start watching for Japanese beetles and June bugs. They should be hatching soon. It's too late to kill the adult grubs but as the adult beetles fly around, they are laying eggs in the soil. The eggs will hatch in to small grubs around mid-August. If you want to use grub control now, you must use a preventive insecticide. This product will prevent the eggs from hatching but must be applied before the eggs hatch. The insecticide must contain imidacloprid (*Bayer Advanced Season-long Grub Control or Scotts Grubex*) or halofenozide (*Mach 2*). The latter part of June could bring the first glimpses of Brown Patch. Brown patch is caused by high temps and humidity, along with high levels of nitrogen in the soil. This is why fertilizing isn't recommended after early March. If brown patch occurs, mancozeb can be used but must be applied weekly. A new granular product, called *Maxcide*, is now on the market that gives 28-day control. But the key to both of these products is to use them early on. **Do not fertilize or plant grass!**

July- Continue to mow but don't cut too short. It's a matter of maintaining what you have at this point. If you have weeds and plan to reseed or over seed in the fall, start identifying weeds now and choosing your herbicide. Read the label and see how long you have to wait before sowing grass after applying. This is important! We can start to plant grass in mid-August so count back from there and apply. Remember that herbicides don't work well at 90 degrees or higher. You can still apply preventive grub control this month.

August- To green up a tired looking lawn, apply iron to the lawn. This will green it up without the use of nitrogen. *Ironite* and *Milorganite* are two easily found iron products to use. Mid-August signals grass planting time. Plant from August 15 to the end of October.

Quick steps for planting:

1. Get rid of weeds and apply fertilizer and lime to area (75 lbs. lime/ 1,000 sq. ft. and 20 lbs. 10-10-10 / 1,000 sq.ft.)
2. Till in to soil to a depth of 6 inches (very important)
3. Sow seeds at recommended rate (tall fescue 6-10 lbs./1,000 sq. ft. or hybrid fescue 5-6 lbs./ 1,000 sq. ft.)
4. Press seeds into soil.
5. Cover with straw (1 bale/ 1,000 sq. ft.)
6. Water frequently for short periods of time.
7. Apply 10 lbs. 10-10-10/ 1,000 sq. ft. three weeks after germination.
8. Continue to water with less frequency but for longer periods of time (needs 1 inch of water each week)

If you aren't planning to seed, fertilize around Labor Day. A slow release lawn fertilizer works best. If trying to prevent winter annuals, apply a pre-emergent such as *Balan*, *Halts* or any crabgrass preventer it must be done before winter annuals germinate. Granulars work best. Apply when grass is dry then water in. Pre-emergents work on winter annual broadleaf weeds. **Use only on established lawns.** In mid-August thru the end of October you can treat for grubs. Use a product containing Dylox or Trichlorfon such as Bayer Advanced 24-hour Grub Control.

September- Winter weeds should start germinating if you didn't apply a pre-emergent. Use a broadleaf weed killer such as *Weed B Gon Max* when you see weeds but check the label for the weed list before applying. Use only on established lawns. **Fertilize now!** In mid-August thru the end of October you can treat for grubs. Use a product containing Dylox or Trichlorfon such as Bayer Advanced 24-hour Grub Control.

October- Keep mowing as long as grass is growing. Get leaves off of the lawn. Mowing them works if there aren't too many. Continue to spray for winter annual weeds. Make your second application of 2, 4-D if wild onions and garlic have been a problem. In mid-August thru the end of October you can treat for grubs. Use a product containing Dylox or Trichlorfon such as Bayer Advanced 24-hour Grub Control.

November- Keep raking leaves up off of the lawn. In late November (Thanksgiving) make a final application of fertilizer. Use 10-10-10 this time so the lawn will get a quick bedtime snack before it goes to sleep for the winter. This is a great time to take a soil test. You'll get results back quickly so you can be ready for spring fertilizing.

December- Start thinking about next year!

Common Winter Annual Weeds:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Chickweed | Annual bluegrass |
| Henbit | Smallflower buttercup |
| Knawel | Johnny jumpup violet |
| Shepherdspurse | Corn speedwell |
| Red deadnettle | Catchweed bedstraw |
| Mouseearcress | Buttercup |
| Hairy bittercress | Bluets |
| Carolina geranium | |

Winter annuals must be killed before they start to disperse seeds. If you have a lot of them, it will probably take more than one application of herbicide during the winter months. Once they start seeding in the spring, it's too late.

Perennials and summer annuals should be sprayed while they are actively growing. Young is best. It does no good to spray for them if they have not come up yet. But also remember that summer annuals such as crabgrass can be controlled with pre-emergent herbicides before they germinate. The key to controlling annuals is to get rid of them before they set seed.

Donna Teasley
Extension Agent, Horticulture



Burke County Center
130 Ammons Drive, Suite 2
Morganton, NC 28655
828-764-9480

burke.ces.ncsu.edu

Find us on Facebook at:
N.C. Cooperative Extension
Burke County