

**Management calendars for cool- and warm-season lawns in NE
September 9, 2016**

There are many considerations when caring for a lawn. From scheduling mowing and irrigation to controlling weeds and white grubs, it can be difficult to stay on top of management practices at the proper time of year. With this in mind, we have put together management calendars for cool- and warm-season lawns in NE that summarize our other resources and identify the time of year when environmental conditions and pest life cycles typically necessitate common turf management practices. We have tried to include a reasonable amount of information, while still making the calendars easy to interpret. These new resources should simplify your decision-making process and help you decide to control broadleaf weeds and fertilize your cool-season lawn this fall, apply a preemergence herbicide when soil temperatures reach 55F next spring, and irrigate with an appropriate amount of water when early symptoms of drought stress are observed next summer.

These calendars are meant to be a starting point for management considerations, and certainly do not replace the many resources available on our website (turf.unl.edu).

Bill Kreuser, Assistant Professor, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, wkreuser2@unl.edu

Cole Thompson, Assistant Professor, Integrated Turfgrass Management Specialist, cole.thompson@unl.edu



Management Calendar for Cool-Season Lawns

	Early Spring March-May	Late Spring May-June	Early Summer July-August	Late Summer August- September	Early Fall September- October	Late Fall - Winter
Mowing	Mow at 2.5" to 3.5" depending on species* for the entire growing season, returning clippings to the lawn. Never remove more than 1/3 of the total canopy height at one time. Mowing at the shorter end of the recommended range will require more frequent mowing than at the higher end of the recommended range. Mowing too infrequently – called scalping – accelerates growth rate, reduces quality and canopy density, and encourages weed encroachment.					
Irrigation	Irrigation is generally not necessary unless the weather is abnormally warm and dry.	More lawn problems arise from over-watering than under-watering. Lawns should be watered deeply with 0.5 to 1.0" of water (depending on soil type) only when wilt is observed. Common symptoms of minor drought include light blue-green color and lingering footprints. Automatic irrigation systems should be closely monitored, and be equipped with either a rainout or soil-moisture sensor to prevent irrigation when there is sufficient soil moisture.				Irrigation is generally not necessary unless the weather is abnormally warm and dry.
Fertilizer	Fertilizer not recommended unless lawn was established the prior fall and has low density.	Apply 0.50 to 0.75 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 ft ² once growth rate slows after spring surge. Fertilizers containing 50% quick and slow release nitrogen are a good choice for even feed.	Apply fertilizer if lawn quality is unacceptable. Newer lawns are more likely to benefit from early summer fertilizer than older, well-established lawns. Controlled release and organic fertilizers reduce burn risk.	Apply 0.50 to 0.75 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer per 1000 ft ² to recover from summer stress.	Young lawns (<10 years old) and lawns with poor density and quality can benefit from a mid-fall fertilizer application. Fertilizers should contain mostly water soluble nitrogen (WSN) sources.	No fertilizer is recommended because uptake is low during this time.
Cultivation	Avoid cultivation until turf resumes active growth. Lawn aeration or thatch removal (dethatching) is permissible if soil compaction exists or thatch is greater than 3/4" in depth. Cultivating through a preemergence herbicide barrier may reduce efficacy.		Avoid aggressive lawn cultivation.	Because of summer annual weed pressure in spring, lawn aeration or thatch removal (dethatching) is preferred in fall and permissible if soil compaction exists or thatch is greater than 3/4" in depth.		Avoid lawn cultivation.

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension education programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.