

Management Calendar for Warm-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	Mowing is not necessary.	Mow at 2.5" to 3.5" 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 increased mowing frequency. Buffalograss* and zoysiagrass* can tolerate mowing at 0.5", but this is not recommended for home lawns. Mowing too infrequently – called scalping – accelerates growth rate, reduces quality and canopy density, and encourages weed encroachment.				Mowing is not necessary.
Irrigation	Irrigation is not necessary before active growth resumes.	More lawn problems arise from over-watering than under-watering. Warm-season grasses are exceptionally drought tolerant and often require little to no supplemental irrigation to maintain color in Nebraska. If you cannot tolerate reduced quality from drought stress, supplement precipitation as needed if wilt is observed, but usually not more than 1.0" of water is required per growing month. Irrigation frequency is dependent upon soil type - sandy soils may require more frequent irrigation, but do not necessarily require more total irrigation. Common symptoms of minor drought include light blue-green color and lingering footprints. Since regular irrigation is not necessary, turn off automatic irrigation systems and manually supplement when necessary.				Irrigation is not necessary during winter dormancy.
Fertilizer	Fertilizer not recommended.	Apply 0.5-1.0 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 ft ² (50% slow release is recommended) after greenup.	If higher quality is desired, a second application of 0.5-1.0 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 ft ² (50% slow release is recommended) is permissible.	Fertilizer not recommended.		
Cultivation	Cultivation not recommended.	Avoid cultivation until turf resumes active growth. Lawn aeration or thatch removal (dethatching) is permissible if soil compaction exists or thatch is greater than ¾" in depth. Cultivating through a preemergence herbicide barrier may reduce efficacy.			Cultivation not recommended.	

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Weeds	<p>Apply a preemergence herbicide for control of summer annual weeds such as crabgrass when the soil temperature reaches 55F at a 2" depth and after the risk of a hard frost has passed. Depending on soil type, turfgrass density, and the history of summer annual weed prevalence, a lawn may require a second application 8-10 weeks after the first for season-long control. This is especially true for later-germinating weeds such as goosegrass or foxtails.</p> <p><i>Note: Winter annuals such as annual bluegrass, henbit, and mouseear chickweed germinate in the fall. They flower in spring and die in early summer. Thus, postemergence control isn't recommended.</i></p>		<p>Postemergence control of summer annual weeds is most successful when weeds are young in late spring and early summer.</p> <p><i>Note: Most preemergence herbicides will not control emerged seedlings. However, a postemergence herbicide can be mixed with midsummer-applied preemergence herbicides to control existing young weeds and prevent new seedlings from emerging.</i></p>	<p>Because mature and/or stressed weeds are difficult to control, control with herbicides is not recommended for most weeds. Summer annual weeds will naturally die after the first frost.</p> <p><i>Note: Use a preemergence herbicide in lawns with a history of winter annuals.</i></p>	<p>Postemergence control of broadleaf perennials and winter annuals is most successful in fall. Time the first application around the first frost. Combination herbicide mixtures are generally more successful than individual active ingredients.</p>	<p>Provided that turf is fully dormant, nonselective postemergence herbicides such as glyphosate may be safely used to control problematic winter annual and perennial weeds.</p>



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Diseases	Large patch of zoysiagrass is common during cool and wet periods in spring and fall (when turf is greening or entering dormancy). Cultivation may spread disease.		Generally no disease concerns. Leaf spot is possible on buffalograss, but there are currently no management recommendations.	Large patch may be active in zoysiagrass. A single preventive fungicide application may protect zoysiagrass lawns through next spring, but this is not recommended unless a lawn has a history of damage.		Generally no disease concerns.
Insects	Generally no insect concerns.	Damaging levels of chinch bugs may sporadically occur in buffalograss or zoysiagrass. Billbug damage may occur on zoysiagrass. For either, insecticide treatment is only recommended with damaging populations of pests. Damage from white grubs is not common. Isolated damage from mealybugs or webworms may sporadically occur on buffalograss.			Generally no insect concerns.	
Establishment	Establishment not recommended.	Begin establishment after the risk of frost has passed. Buffalograss and zoysiagrass may be seeded, plugged, or sodded.			Establishment not recommended.	

*Buffalograss and zoysiagrass are potential warm-season lawn species for Nebraska, but buffalograss is most appropriate because of increased cold tolerance. Management strategies are best determined by the effects of environmental conditions on the managed species (and relevant pests). Thus, we recommend using environmental triggers such as soil temperature and moisture or growing degree days, or plant responses such as wilt or loss of green color to schedule management. This calendar is only meant as a general guide for when appropriate environmental conditions occur for each management category.

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