



EARLY
SUMMER

TurfMasters LLC
Imagine What Green...
Can Do For You!

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Turf Matters

BAITING the Birds

Bird feeders and baths are obvious ways to attract our fine feathered friends to your property. However, if you'd rather take a more natural route, flowering plants can work as well. The following varieties all produce seed that serves as a food source for sparrows, finches and other songbirds:

- Bee balm
- Goldenrod
- Larkspur
- Purple coneflower
- Sunflower
- Spider flower
- Aster
- Bachelor's button
- Snapdragon
- Cockscomb

Add any of these flowering plants to your landscape, and the birds will be singing their gratitude in no time!



Flowering plants are a great way to attract birds to your property.

Grappling with Grubs

DON'T LET THEM EAT YOUR LAWN OUT FROM UNDER YOU!

Even the best-looking turf may be hiding an unseen threat underground in the form of white grubs. These pests make their home in the soil where they feed on grass roots.

White grubs are the larval form of scarab beetles, such as European chafer and Japanese beetles, which lay their eggs in lawn soil in early summer. Roughly two weeks later, the eggs hatch into grubs that go to work devouring roots through the rest of the summer and into the fall.

Grubs are dangerous because they're sneaky. You might not even know they're around until damage begins appearing. And by then you'll have two issues to deal with: repairing the damaged areas, and getting rid of the pests that caused the damage.

SIGNS THAT GRUBS ARE ACTIVE

If heavy populations of grubs are feeding on your lawn's roots, you may notice large, irregular, brown patches of turf that can easily be separated from

the soil (like rolling up a carpet). Skunks, raccoons and birds feed on grubs, so if you see these animals digging in your turf, that's also a good sign that grubs are present.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

It never hurts to perform a visual check for grubs. By literally taking an inventory, you

can determine if action needs to be taken against them. To check for grubs, just pull up a small section of sod from your lawn. If you find fewer than five grubs per square foot, you need not worry. However, six or more grubs per square foot will require treatment to prevent damage to your turf.

If treatment is necessary, it should be applied as soon as possible (and definitely before damage begins to appear). If grub activity does lead to damaged areas, reseeding and extra watering will likely be necessary to repair them.



White grubs, or scarab beetle larvae, feed on grass roots.

REMEMBER...

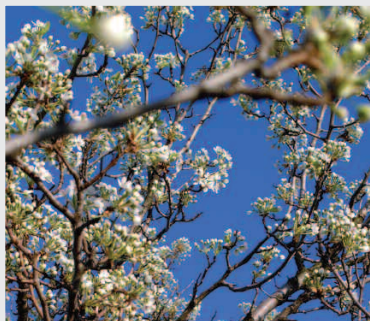
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- Six or more grubs per square foot will require treatment.



PRUNING TIPS for Flowering Trees

With their floral beauty and seasonal interest, flowering trees can make any landscape stand out from the crowd. To ensure that these “stand-outs” provide a spectacular show from year to year, proper pruning is essential.

If you have summer-flowering trees (with blooms occurring on new wood produced in the spring), pruning should be done in the winter or early spring. This will encourage a healthy growing environment for new buds. On the other hand, spring-flowering trees (with blooms occurring on wood produced in the summer) should be pruned in the early spring after the plants have bloomed.



Proper pruning improves the health and beauty of flowering trees.

Crabapple, dogwood, Japanese maple and cherry are all examples of flowering trees that will benefit from good pruning practices. These trees have a tendency to grow quickly, and regular pruning will help to reduce stress and promote more uniform, healthy growth. The removal of dead, diseased or broken branches as they appear will also improve tree health and help to prevent injury to people or property from falling limbs.



IPM... A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PEST CONTROL

Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, is a scientific method of controlling pests that seeks out alternatives to chemical treatments whenever possible. There are six basic components to IPM, which include:

Determining Acceptable Pest Levels.

Trying to destroy an entire insect population is often impossible. Plus, the eradication approach will usually destroy beneficial insects and/or bacteria that are necessary for good plant health. The alternative is to determine what constitutes acceptable pest levels, then take control measures only when those levels have been reached.

Preventative Practices. Choosing plant varieties that are known to grow well in your area, then taking steps to keep those plants healthy, will help to stop pests from becoming a problem in the first place.

Inspection.

It's important to examine lawns and landscape plants regularly for signs of infestation and damage. It's also necessary to know what different types of pests look like and what kinds of damage they do.

REMEMBER...

- IPM looks for alternatives to chemical treatments.
- IPM can be used to treat insects, disease, weeds and other pests.

Mechanical Controls. These are considered before chemical controls, and may include such methods as hand-picking, pest barriers and trap setting.

Biological Controls. The idea here is to let nature provide control. For example, a beneficial insect might be introduced to the landscape that will feed on the pests in question.

Chemical Controls. When all else fails, pesticides may be used for control.

Although insects most often come to mind when discussing IPM, it can be used to treat plant diseases, weeds and other pests as well. By utilizing all of the tactics listed above, IPM can provide an effective, economical and ecological means of pest control for any lawn and landscape.

Nobody likes a slug. Not only are they ugly and slimy, but their feeding activity damages plants. If you've been noticing holes in leaves, this may be a sign that slugs have set up shop in your garden. Slime trails (gasp!) can indicate the presence of slugs as well.

You can discourage slugs by making your garden less hospitable to them. Since they're prone to drying out, these pests need to stay in warm, moist spots (such as underneath leaves). If you keep planting beds cleaned up and cut away foliage at ground level, your garden won't be as slug-friendly. Plus, they won't be able to hide from natural predators such as toads and snakes when ground-level leaf cover is taken away.

If it's too late for preventative measures, more aggressive tactics will be necessary. You may have heard that pouring salt directly on a slug will kill it. While this may be true, it's not recommended, since excessive salt can hurt your plants.

A SLIMY GAR

U G H . . .

Inspection is an essential component of Integrated Pest Management.



Top-Notch Tomatoes

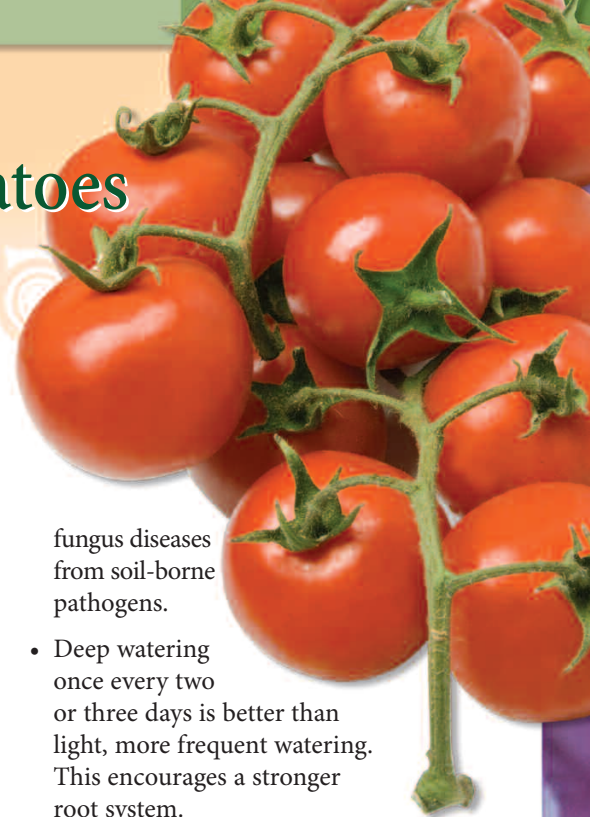
There's nothing quite like the taste of a home-grown tomato. If you'll be growing your own this summer, the following tips can help to ensure a more successful crop:

- Make sure they're planted in a location that gets plenty of direct sunlight each day.
- If you'll be starting with seeds, don't plant them too close together, since the seedlings need ample room to branch out. A minimum spacing of 24" between plants is recommended.
- Tomatoes thrive in heat. You can encourage earlier fruiting by heating up the soil a few weeks before planting (covering the soil with black plastic will do the trick).
- Staking or caging your tomato plants leads to more tomatoes and helps to minimize disease or insect damage.
- As soon as your tomato plants reach 3' in height, it's a good idea to remove any leaves from the bottom 1' of the stem. These leaves are more susceptible to

fungus diseases from soil-borne pathogens.

- Deep watering once every two or three days is better than light, more frequent watering. This encourages a stronger root system.

Depending on the variety you choose, you should have tomatoes that are ripe and ready to eat within 55 to 85 days. They'll keep well in a cool, dry location, and you should avoid storing them in the refrigerator since this causes them to lose their flavor and texture. **Happy growing!**



Slugs do most of their feeding under the cover of night.

Instead, commercially available slug traps can be used to reduce their numbers. Or, if you're more of a "do-it-yourselfer," you can create your own slug trap with a pie tin and some stale beer. Simply leave a tin full of beer where you know slugs have been feeding. The slugs won't be able to resist the trap, and they'll drown in the beer.

DEN MENACE
SLUGS!

The Life of a Tree

Much like humans, trees go through different life stages as they age, with each stage distinguishable from the others by specific traits. As you look at the trees in your landscape, you may see examples of the following:

INFANT STAGE – Trees in this stage are thin and small with tender bark. They're very vulnerable at this point in their life and may develop defense mechanisms (such as thorns) to discourage would-be predators.

YOUTH STAGE – Trees in the youth stage have long, slender branches and pointed tops. Growth occurs rapidly during this stage, and proper tree architecture can be encouraged through pruning of weak or poorly developing branches.

PRIME-OF-LIFE STAGE – By the time they've reached their prime, trees have long, strong branches and full, round-topped

crowns. Growth isn't as rapid during this stage, with the majority of the tree's energy going to flower and fruit production.

MIDDLE-AGE STAGE – Limbs grow thicker and heavier during this stage, causing crowns to flatten out. Trees in this stage are more vulnerable to insects and disease, making regular care and maintenance more important than ever.

SENIOR STAGE – In this stage, canopies are flat-topped and full of heavy limbs, some of which may be covered by short sprouts. As major limbs start dying, gaps may become visible in the canopy. Dead limbs should be pruned away during this stage.

TWILIGHT STAGE – At this point, large

REMEMBER...

- Trees go through multiple life stages.
- The type of care a tree needs depends on its specific life stage.



A tree in the prime of life!

limbs begin dying and breaking off from the tree, leaving behind a smaller crown made up of scattered limbs and short twigs.

DEATH STAGE – Dead trees eventually fall apart and decay back into the soil. If you have a dead tree on your property in a hazardous location, it should be removed as soon as possible. Otherwise, you might consider leaving it in place to provide food and shelter for various forms of wildlife.

The species, location and amount of care a tree receives will determine the duration of each life stage. However, no matter what stage they're in, you can be sure that the trees on your property are making a valuable contribution to the environment we all share.



REWARD YOURSELF: SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS
ABOUT TURFMASTERS AND **SAVE \$20!**

TurfMasters LLC
Imagine What Green...
Can Do For You!

If you know any homeowners who can benefit from the use of our services, have them give us a call at (203) 865-0300 (Greater New Haven) or (860) 528-4440 (Greater Hartford). All they have to do is mention your name. For each referral you send us who signs up for our Full Program, you'll receive \$20 off your next service to show our gratitude!

This program applies to new clients only, and Referral Fees may not exceed the price per service. New clients must receive our Full Lawn Program to qualify for referral discount.



POISON IVY

has three pointed, green leaves that turn red in the fall. It usually grows as a climbing vine.



POISON OAK

also has three leaves, resembling those from an oak tree, and grows as a shrub.



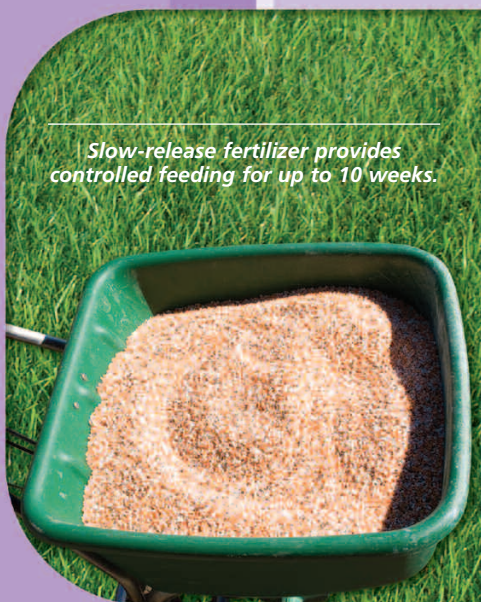
POISON SUMAC

has seven to 13 leaves per stalk and grows as a shrub or small tree. This plant has red veins and produces berries.

What's Your Poison?

If you've ever had poison ivy, oak or sumac, you know how irritating it can be. Urushiol, the toxin released by these bothersome plants, causes an itchy, red rash that can last up to four weeks! To avoid infection, it's a good idea to wear gloves, long sleeves, long pants and enclosed footwear when working in your garden.

Be careful out there!



Slow-release fertilizer provides controlled feeding for up to 10 weeks.

SUMMER LAWN FERTILIZATION? TAKE IT SLOW.

The spring surge of lawn growth is coming to an end. That makes this a good time to apply slow-release fertilizer, especially for cool-season lawns like tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. Rather than encouraging dramatic vertical shoot growth, slow-release fertilizer will help your turf to retain its color and health while fending off diseases this summer.

One application of slow-release fertilizer can provide your lawn with controlled feeding for up to 10 weeks, as opposed to just 30 days with conventional fast-release fertilizers. Plus, it will encourage a more drought-tolerant lawn, just in time for the hot, dry weather ahead of us. Slow-release fertilizer is also more resistant to nutrient loss through leaching (washing through the soil into the water supply), leading to improved feeding efficiency.

Slow-release fertilizer this summer, along with regular mowing and watering, will provide you with a greener, more resilient lawn that you'll love coming home to!