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PEST WATCH: SOD WEBWORMS

Known for the silk-lined tunnels they create in the thatch layer, sod webworms are caterpillars that feed on grass blades and stems. These pests are more likely to be found in hot, sunny, dry spots than in shaded turf.

Sod webworm injury is often mistaken for heat and drought stress. It first appears as small, brown patches of grass. These patches may eventually run together, forming larger, irregular, thin and brown areas.

One way to confirm the presence of sod webworms is to part the grass blades in between a brown patch and green, healthy grass. If small, green pellets are visible, these are the excrement of the caterpillars and indicate a problem.

As always, healthy lawns are less vulnerable to pest damage. Proper watering, aerating and fertilizing can help to prevent an infestation. In some cases, an insecticide application may be necessary to keep sod webworms under control.



Slice seeding improves seed-to-soil contact.

Revitalize That Tired-Looking Lawn

AERATION, OVERSEEDING AND SLICE SEEDING CAN WORK WONDERS

The cool, crisp weather of fall makes it easy to forget how overbearing summer can be. Unfortunately, our lawns have a little more trouble putting summer's heat and dryness behind them.

If your turf is looking a little worse for wear this fall, you're not alone. Lots of lawns are showing the effects of another scorching summer. You may be noticing:

- Dead or very thin sections of turf.
- Grass that feels especially soft or spongy when walking across it.
- An abundance of broadleaf or grassy weeds in the lawn.
- A failure to improve in appearance despite regular watering and fertilization.

RENOVATING NOW WILL ENCOURAGE BEAUTIFUL TURF LATER

Fall is a great time for lawn renovations. Not only is the weather milder, but new grass seed will have much less competition from weed seeds trying to grow.

Core aeration is one of the best things that can be done for your lawn. An aerating machine removes plugs (or cores) of thatch and soil from your turf, and the holes left behind make it easier for air, water and fertilizer to reach the root system. The result is a stronger, more extensive root system and greener, healthier, more robust turf.

You might also want to reseed your lawn, which can be done in one of two ways. **Overseeding after aeration** is a good way to thicken up thin turf. Seed is spread evenly over any thin or bare areas, soon after aeration is completed. Some of the seed lodges in the holes made by the aerator, and the increased seed-to-soil contact improves germination. If aeration hasn't been done, **slice seeding** is another option. A slice seeding machine creates vertical "slices" in the soil, then deposits seed directly into them. Again, germination rates are improved due to the seed coming into direct contact with the soil.

Each of these renovation methods can help to get your summer-stressed lawn back in shape again. Just remember, regardless of the method you choose, the sooner it's performed the better!



GETTING COOL-SEASON COLOR FROM PERENNIALS

Tree and shrub leaves aren't the only source of fall color. With late-blooming perennials, your landscape can still be a sight to behold this fall. Here are just a few colorful varieties to consider for your property:

Black-Eyed Susan

Striking yellow blooms from early summer through fall. Grows in full sun to partial shade.

Hardy Mum

Blooms in every color but blue from early September through mid-October. Prefers full sun.

Joe Pye Weed

Attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, with dusty rose to mauve blooms in late summer and early fall.

Russian Sage

Lavender-blue flowers from mid-summer through fall. Easy to grow (tolerant of poor soil and dry conditions).

Aster

Dark lavender and purple blooms from late summer into fall. Can reach up to 5' in height.

Used alone or in combination, each of these perennials will make an eye-catching addition to your fall landscape.



Black-Eyed Susan

What's Your System for Watering?

Supplemental watering in the absence of rainfall is sometimes easier said than done. Maybe you spend a lot of time away from home. Or, perhaps you just don't have enough time in the day to set up those sprinklers. Either way, if your lawn, trees and shrubs didn't get sufficient water over the summer, their looks and health are probably suffering.

Wouldn't it be great if you could give your lawn and landscape plants all the water they need without even lifting a finger? With an automatic irrigation system, you can.

THESE SYSTEMS ARE LOADED WITH "SMART" FEATURES

The great thing about automatic irrigation systems is their consistency. For example:



Sprinkler head systems are great for large lawn areas.

- Built-in timers can limit watering to the cooler parts of the day when less water will be lost due to evaporation.
- With independent station programming, these systems can be set to provide certain plants with more or less water than others depending on their specific needs.
- Smart controllers can even alter the amount of water applied to your property based on weather conditions and the amount of moisture present in the soil.



Drip irrigation systems work well in planting beds.

WHAT'S YOUR TYPE?

Automatic irrigation systems come in two varieties. You're probably most familiar with **sprinkler head systems**, which release water from a distribution device attached to the end of a water pipe. These systems work best for spacious lawn areas. **Drip irrigation systems**, on the other hand, release water from tubes with holes in them. These systems are more suited to flower gardens and other planting beds. Depending on your landscape's specific layout, just one or a combination of both types may be appropriate for your needs.

Fall is a great time to have an automatic irrigation system installed. Properly maintained, it will provide your lawn and landscape with the right amounts of water at the right times...for many hot summers to come. Not to mention, it can help to conserve water and lower your water bill!



Fall is Fantastic for Fertilization

IN FACT, THIS IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR FOR IT

Since top growth slows down (or stops altogether) in the fall, your lawn, trees and shrubs no longer have to continue the constant flow of nutrients and water to leaves and blades. Instead, they're using this time to build up a storehouse of nutrients in preparation for new growth in the spring.

The storage process occurs in the plants' root systems. A heavy fall feeding makes more nutrients available and helps to trigger the process. The fatter and more extensive roots become from fall fertilization, the better growth you'll see next year. This is especially true for fall-seeded lawns and newly planted trees and shrubs.

Of course, improved growth isn't the only benefit you can expect from fall feeding. With an extra dose of nutrients this fall, you can expect:

- Stronger resistance to insects and diseases.
- Enhanced winter color in turf and evergreens.
- Better water-holding ability, which can decrease the drying, browning effects of cold winter winds.
- Increased blooming in your flowering trees and shrubs.

Heavy fall fertilization is a vital part of any good lawn, tree and shrub care program. By meeting the nutritional needs of your plants this fall, you'll be rewarded with a healthier, more beautiful landscape that you'll love coming home to.



Baby it's Cold Outside!

Well, maybe it's not cold yet, but it will be sooner than you think. That doesn't mean outdoor entertaining has to come to an end though. With the right type of heating, your deck or patio can stay warm and toasty right on through the winter.

IF FIRE IS YOUR THING, TRY ONE OF THESE

Chiminea – Also known as a “pot-bellied fireplace,” this front-loading wood burner originated in Mexico. Traditional chimineas are made from terra cotta, though cast iron and aluminum versions are also available.

Firepit – Whether it's an actual pit dug into the ground or a portable metal pit with wheels, you can count on a firepit to radiate plenty of heat for casual get-togethers.

Fireplace – Generally more “sophisticated” than a firepit, a fireplace is a great way to enhance the looks and functionality of an outdoor room. You can choose from both wood-burning and gas-fired versions.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

Patio heaters offer a less traditional alternative to outdoor heating. Propane and electric versions come in a variety of sizes and configurations. You might even choose a table-top model for more intimate gatherings.

When it does get cold outside, you and your guests will be sure to warm up to any of these options.



Chiminea



Patio Heater



A fireplace is perfect for an intimate gathering.



REFERRAL INCENTIVE CONTEST

Provide two legitimate lawn care referrals and enter to win 1 of the 32 prizes below!



2 – Gift Cards
(\$500 value each)



10 – Gift Cards
(\$100 value each)



20 – Gift Cards
(\$50 value each)

And of course our current Referral Program will still apply. For every referral that becomes a TurfMasters Full Program Client, you will receive a \$20 credit to your account - automatically!



- Referral cannot be a current TurfMasters client.
- Referral must be located in our service area (call with any questions on our service area).
- Referral must be a homeowner (no renters, condos, apartments, etc.).
- Referral must be a legitimate prospect – they must know we will be providing a FREE, no-obligation lawn evaluation and price quote.

See enclosure for referral form or go to imagine-green.com/client.
Contest winners will be notified via e-mail and posted on our website on October 15, 2011.

So Your Lawn Has Been Seeded. Now What?



Planting seed is only the first step in growing new grass. The next step is to make sure the seed gets plenty of water.

You'll need to water often right after the seed is planted – enough to keep the top ½" of soil moist at all times. After seedlings appear, you can ease off on watering, gradually scaling back to just once or twice a week as needed.

It's also important to limit foot traffic during the first few weeks. You should avoid walking on the lawn as much as possible until the new grass has a chance to get established.

A slow-release fertilizer application will help to get the new turf off to a strong start. However, this shouldn't be applied until four to six weeks after the first seedlings appear.

Finally, the new grass will be ready for its first mowing once it reaches about 4" in height.

With the right after-seeding care, your lawn will be looking like new in no time!



What's for dinner?



THE ONE AND ONLY BEER CHICKEN

1 12-oz. can beer

1 whole chicken (3-4 lbs.)

Your favorite poultry grill rub

Wash chicken inside and out and pat dry. Open beer can and create several additional openings in top of can (or pour beer into a ceramic holder like the one shown).

Use a commercial rub, or make your own by combining ¼ cup brown sugar with any of the following: coarse black pepper, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, coarse salt, celery seed, red pepper, rosemary, oregano or cumin. Rub chicken down with spices (inside and out) and

place bird on beer can or ceramic holder so that it stands upright (like a tripod).

Set up grill for indirect grilling, keeping coals to the sides and using aluminum foil or some other kind of drip pan in center. Soak some apple or hickory chips in a beer and water mixture. When grill is ready for cooking, toss in wood chips and place chicken in center of grate. Cook covered until golden brown and internal temperature of meat reaches 180° F (about 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours). Add more coals after an hour if needed.

Remove upright and let rest 5 minutes before serving. You and your guests will enjoy a very tasty and moist meal!