



FALL



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Turf Matters

Q and A

Lately I've noticed a bunch of tiny black spots on my car, siding, deck and windows. Do you know where this might be coming from?

This sounds a lot like artillery fungus, also known as shotgun fungus. The black spots you're seeing are most likely the mature spore masses that are expelled (or "shot") from the fruiting bodies of the fungus. This fungus is capable of shooting the spores up to 20'!

Artillery fungus grows in organic mulches made from wood products, and the spores can be very difficult to remove from the surfaces they cover. You may have some luck power washing with hot water, then hand scrubbing with a lightly abrasive pad.

The fungus grows best in undisturbed mulch, so it's a good idea to rake any organic mulch piles regularly. Refreshing organic mulch at least once a year is a good idea, too. You might also consider spraying organic mulch piles with a bleach and water mixture to prevent the fungus from growing.

Fall Fertilization Recharges Roots

Turf, tree and shrub root systems power up plants for renewed growth every spring. But to be sure they have enough power in the spring, it's important to recharge them every fall.

What Makes Fall So Important?

In the spring and summer, your entire landscape's energy goes into processing nutrients for top growth. But in the fall, top growth slows down and your plants start producing more roots and building up nutrient reserves. These reserves will make it possible for your plants to get a stronger, healthier start next spring. They'll also help your landscape handle the stresses of insects, disease and hot, dry weather throughout the next growing season.

Heavy Fall Fertilization is Key

In the fall, your lawn, trees and shrubs will make better use of large amounts of fertilizer than at any other time of year. Their root systems will expand to store sugars they convert from fertilizers applied at this time. For your lawn, this will lead to earlier and richer green-up in the spring, with less of the unhealthy "surge" growth that requires heavy mowing and encourages disease problems.

For your trees and shrubs, it will lead to improved health, increased blooming and better growth overall.

Remember, fall fertilization is the best way to "jump start" all of your landscape plants next spring. Make sure they get the big dose of fertilizer they need!



Fall fertilization gives your lawn, trees and shrubs the nutrients they need for strong spring growth.

Did You Know?

- A 100' tall tree provides all of the wood and paper products used by the average American for an entire year.
- Over 850 different species of trees can be found in the United States. The Appalachian Mountains alone support more species of trees than can be found in all of Europe!
- Every ton of recycled paper requires 7,000 fewer gallons of water to manufacture than virgin paper.
- The earliest records of tree planting and care come from Egyptian tomb paintings circa 2200 B.C.
- The Roman Empire planted trees along roads to provide shade for the ever-marching Roman Army.



Pruning Primer

There's much more to pruning than just cutting branches. It's really a combination of science and art, and if done properly, it improves both the health and the looks of your trees. Here are five types of pruning that can benefit the trees in your landscape:

Crown Thinning – Removes smaller outer canopy branches, helping to reduce weight and increase sunlight and air penetration.

Crown Cleaning – Selectively removes hazardous, dead or dying branches from the tree canopy.

Crown Raising – Removes lower branches to increase clearance under the leaf canopy (also known as “elevation” or “limbing up”).

Crown Reduction – Carefully removes certain stems or branches back to lateral limbs (as opposed to “topping,” which leaves large, open wounds that subject the tree to disease and decay).

Crown Restoration – Corrective pruning done over a period of time to restore good structure and appearance in trees that have been damaged or topped.



Divide & Multiply

Dividing perennials not only helps to control plant size and increase their number, but it rejuvenates them too. Spring- and summer-blooming perennials should be divided in the fall every three to five years. Since the plant is no longer blooming, all of its energy can be used for root and leaf development.

The plants need to be watered thoroughly a day or two before dividing, and the foliage should be cut back to 6" above the ground to make division easier. It's also a good idea to prepare transplant holes in advance of dividing. Parent plants should be dug up carefully so that the roots aren't damaged, and excess soil should be removed from the root ball.

Divisions are best made using a sharp, pointed shovel or a spading fork. Each new division should contain three to five “eyes,” or the buds that produce new shoots. The divisions can then be planted at the same depth they were originally, followed by a thorough watering and mulching to keep the soil warm.



Spring- and summer-blooming perennials respond well to dividing in the fall (every three to five years).

This is an easy and inexpensive way to gain additional plants for your garden. Plus, it will keep them vigorous and blooming freely!



Keep Mowing This Fall!

We hear from a lot of customers who wonder how long they should keep mowing their lawns, and the answer is pretty simple: as long as the grass keeps growing! Just be sure that you lower the mowing height for the final cut of the season (2" to 2 ½" should suffice). Mowing shorter for the final cut will enable your grass to keep its green color longer while helping to prevent disease from developing. This is especially important for lawns that have had problems with snow mold in the past.

Also, remember to let your mower run completely out of gas after the last cut. This will prevent gummy deposits from developing over the winter that could make the mower hard to start next spring.

Thinking of Planting? Now's a Great Time!

Do you have the perfect spot in mind for a new tree or grouping of shrubs? Maybe you lost a plant, or some of your older shrubs need to be replaced because they've become overgrown. If you're in a newer home, chances are there are still some parts of your master landscape plan to be installed. Or, if you're planning to move, your landscape may need a facelift before you put your home up for sale.

Whatever your situation, if you want to install trees or shrubs, fall is a great time to do it. The cooler weather and more plentiful moisture give landscape plants a chance to put out roots and get used to their new home before the stress of next summer's heat and dryness is upon them. They'll have an extra growing season to become established, and you'll have the pleasure of seeing your new landscape plants bloom or leaf out next spring.

As with any landscaping project, it's always a good idea to get professional advice and help. You'll get top-quality results, your project will be done quickly, and your back muscles will suffer less as well!



It's Not too Late to Rejuvenate!

Fall is the best time of year for reinvigorating a less-than-thick lawn. Seeding is a great way to do it, since the new grass will be able to establish itself both now and next spring before summer's heat returns.

Two effective ways to seed your lawn are core aeration with overseeding, and slit-seeding. Both methods provide improved seed-to-soil contact for better germination, and both require fertilizing and regular watering afterwards for seeding success.

Core Aeration with Overseeding – This process removes thousands of plugs of grass and soil from your lawn (roughly the size of your little finger). The plugs (or cores) are left on the surface of your lawn, where they eventually dissolve and help to break down thatch. Seed is spread after the plugs have been removed, making contact with the soil through the holes made by aeration.

Slit-Seeding – This process uses a special machine (known as a slit-seeder) that makes slices in the soil and drops seed into them.

A starter fertilizer that's high in phosphorus will get the new grass off to a good start, and seedlings should sprout within seven to 14 days. It's important to keep the soil moist with light, daily watering until the grass is tall enough to mow. After the first mowing, waterings can gradually be spaced farther apart as the new grass becomes established.

Whichever method you choose, your lawn can look like new again in no time!

Seeding in the fall allows new grass to get established before summer heat returns.





Reward yourself: Spread the good news about TurfMasters and **SAVE \$20!**

If you know any homeowners who can benefit from the use of our services, have them give us a call at (203) 865-0300. 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.

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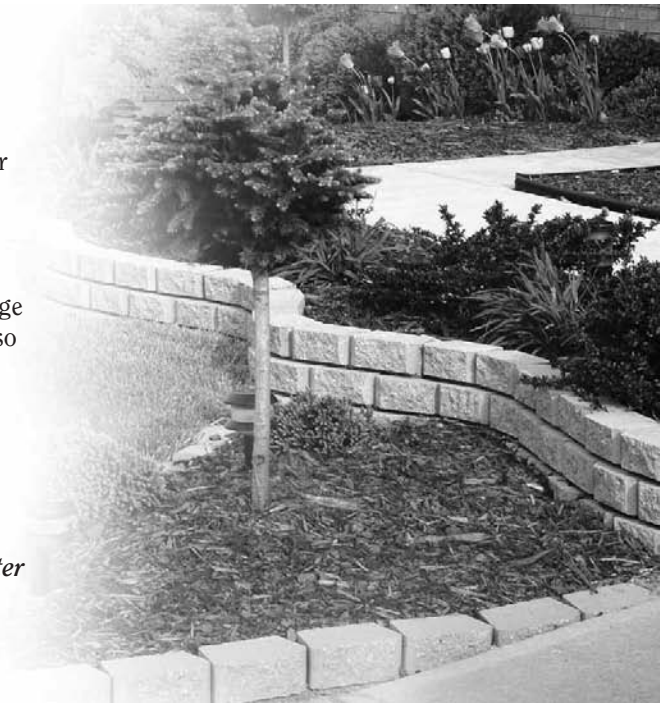
Mulch Makes a Big Difference

Fall is a great time to add mulch to your landscape. Not only will mulch make your property look better, but it will keep soil temperatures more steady around your landscape plants.

Mulch can also be applied in the winter, after the first freeze of the year. This will help to prevent freeze/thaw cycles throughout the colder months, which can damage plant roots and heave new plantings out of the soil in extreme cases. Mulch will also help to conserve moisture in the soil throughout the winter season, making your valuable landscape plantings less susceptible to winter stress.

Both organic and inorganic varieties are beneficial, and they should be applied no deeper than 4". It's important not to pile mulch up against trunks and stems, too, since this can encourage diseases to develop.

Remember, whether it's applied in the fall or winter, your plants will be much better off with mulch!



Q and A

The leaves on my pin oaks have all turned yellow, and I've noticed some brown spots on the leaves as well. Is this a normal change due to fall weather, or could it be something else?

The symptoms you're describing could be the result of pin oak chlorosis, which is caused by iron deficiency. Iron becomes unavailable to trees when soil pH is too high. Iron uptake is also limited when trees are subjected to drought or excessive soil moisture (this stresses the roots, making it more difficult for them to take up nutrients).

Yellow leaves with green veins and brown spots (due to dying tissue) are the most telling symptoms of chlorosis. If it's determined that your pin oaks are suffering from this condition, a soil or foliar application of iron can help.

