

I often refer to *windows of opportunity*. One such window just opened and from all the telephone calls I have lately received, perhaps this is one opportunity from which you might benefit. I call it the window of *Lawn Renovation*.

Maintaining a beautiful bluegrass lawn involves practice, patience, skill, and a dose of good luck. There is a saying, “If it weren’t for bad luck, I’d have no luck at all!” Perhaps disease, drought, or devilish, devouring insects have devastated your lawn. No matter the culprit, the results are the same; dead grass. Now is the opportune time to improve your luck through lawn renovation. September and early October are the ideal months to rejuvenate cool season lawns such as bluegrass and fescue.

More than fifteen different fungal diseases can attack a bluegrass lawn. No matter which the disease-causing pathogen, the result is usually the same: straw-colored, dead grass. Curing a lawn disease with a chemical fungicide is nearly impossible. It is better to take preventive measures.

Three things must come together at the same time for a turf disease to prosper. One is a susceptible host plant — your lawn. The second ingredient is the fungus — a disease-causing pathogen. The third is ideal environmental conditions — temperature, moisture, light, nutrients, and stress factors. Sadly, once your lawn is diseased, it always remains susceptible. Furthermore, once the disease is active, the disease-causing microscopic spores are always present. For the same disease to occur repeatedly year after year, all that is needed is ideal environmental conditions, which is usually hot, wet weather. Does that sound familiar?

Applying expensive preventive fungicides early in May and monthly thereafter may prevent the disease from prospering. However, think about this — if the disease did not reoccur, was it due to the expensive preventive fungicide treatment, or did Mother Nature not deliver the ideal environmental conditions?

A more successful, less expensive preventive measure is to diversify. Many of the newer bluegrass varieties have been bred to be more disease resistant. If you have dying or dead grass areas in your lawn, now would be the opportune time to

introduce newer varieties. Even if you experienced little, if any, disease in your lawn, diversifying now by overseeding with newer disease-resistant varieties will make your lawn more resistant and improve the quality of the turf.

If one chooses not to till the existing lawn, follow these simple steps. Mow the lawn as close as possible and remove the excess clippings. Rake the area thoroughly, scarifying the soil. If possible, aerate. Select a few cultivars of good quality, certified bluegrass seed and apply 1 to 3 pounds of seed to one thousand square feet. After seeding, again rake the area thoroughly to insure the seed makes intimate contact with the soil. Covering the seed with a thin ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) layer of soil is ideal. Water daily after planting. Bluegrass seed can take four to five weeks to germinate. Throughout this time, it is crucial that the soil remains moist. Once the seed has germinated and the new grass is growing, resume normal watering, fertilizing and mowing practices.

If your lawn succumbed to the devastation of disease, drought or devilish devouring insects, I urge you to take preventive measures. Reseed with diverse cultivars while the window of lawn renovation remains open. By so doing, bad luck may remain at bay while good luck decides to stay.