



Lawn Tree Tips For The Upcoming Fall

Fall is coming, regardless of what the weather is doing. A word of caution for some garden jobs though – doing fall work at the proper time is key to getting the response you’re looking for, whether it’s weed control, or greening up of cool season grasses. Following are a few tips to keep in mind.

Do not apply herbicides to dormant turf or weeds. If renovating a lawn and glyphosate (Round Up) or other herbicides will be used to kill older turfgrass and/or weeds prior to seeding, the turfgrass and weeds need to be green and actively growing, not dormant from drought, for herbicides to be effective. September 15 to October 15 is the most effective time to apply post emergence herbicides to control broadleaf weeds. Effectiveness is increased if weeds are actively growing at the time of application.

The density of many lawns can be improved by introducing seed into the lawn and allowing these plants to germinate. The optimum time to seed cool-season turfgrasses in Nebraska is between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15. Overseeding more current cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass into a lawn with old bluegrass cultivars may help change the composition of grasses in the lawn, but not to the same extent as completely renovation. Overseeding new cultivars of turf-type tall fescue into older thick bladed cultivars like K31 should not be attempted, but overseeding the new thinner-bladed cultivars of tall fescue into a previously existing Kentucky bluegrass lawn can be successful.

Winter annual weed control on lawns with a history of these weeds should begin now. Use recommended fall management practices to increase turf density for increased competition with weeds. Henbit and Speedwell are two common winter annuals. They are the small, purple and blue flowering weeds that bloomed early in the spring. As winter annuals, most of the seed for next years’ plants will germinate this fall. Overwintering plants then bloom again in early spring, produce seed and die during hot weather. If weed pressure was high this past spring/early summer, apply a pre-emergence herbicide labeled for winter annuals in early September. Mid October applications of typical post-emergence products will control vast majority of winter annual broadleaf weeds.

Fall fertilizations are key applications for cool season turfgrasses. If a lawn has gone dormant wait until it comes out of dormancy, either with rainfall or irrigation, to fertilize. Still a few weeks away as mid -September is ideal timing for initial fall application.

Are your trees dead or just dormant early? Don’t fertilize heat and drought stressed trees with the hopes of encouraging recovery. Nitrogen fertilizer will create additional stress; and fertilization of trees in late summer is not recommended even for healthy trees. If all or the majority of leaves on a tree turned brown over summer, this is likely not reversible. However, consider waiting until next spring before removing a tree on the chance it would recover. The effects of drought in trees can be acute (trees killed outright this summer) to chronic (lasting effects noticed for a number of subsequent years from direct heat and drought stress to decline from various insect and diseases that attack trees during the year of stress. Trees need to be watered correctly and mulched this fall, but fertilization and late summer or fall pruning is best avoided.

The previous information is from the Horticulture Update brought to you by University of Nebraska- Lincoln Extension staff. One of those extension staff is Natalia Bjorklund, based here in Dodge County. Stop by the office at 1206 W. 23rd here in Fremont, call or email her at 402.727.2775 or nbjorklund3@unledu.