



Cool Season Lawn Calendar – Eastern Nebraska

A complicating factor in today’s garden market is turfgrass fertilizers and preemergence weed control products are often available only as combined products. Newer (less than 20 years old) and older lawns should be managed differently for resource efficiency and environmental stewardship. This publication provides timely information for Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue and other cool season grasses (perennial ryegrass and fine fescues).

Newer lawns often struggle due to soil low in nutritional value and high weed pressure. They are best managed by applying a fertilizer plus preemergence herbicide application in late April/early May followed by a second of the same product in early June.

Older lawns need less fertilization to perform well and have lower weed pressure. Preemergence weed control plus fertilizer applications are optional based on need and desired outcome.

Dates	Fertilization		Cultural Practices	Pest Control	Notes
	Newer Lawn	Older Lawn			
April			Begin mowing as needed.		Mow at 3-3.5 inches all summer. Avoid removing more than 1/3 leaf height at one time.
April 25 – May 1	0.75 – 1 lbs N/1000 sq.ft.	⁴ Optional - 0.25 lbs N/1000 sq.ft.	Aerate ⁰ Summer patch prevention ¹	Billbugs ² Annual weed control – 1st application ³	⁰ Use hollow tines for maximum compaction reduction. ¹ When 2-inch soil depth reaches 65F temp., apply fungicides to lawns with history of infection. Repeat application 4 weeks later. ² If lawn has a history of billbug damage, look for adult feeding symptoms or activity in full sun near sidewalks. ³ When a 4-inch soil depth reaches 55F temp, apply fertilizer plus preemergence herbicide for annual weed control, including crabgrass and foxtail. ⁴ If turf characteristics, such as color and density, are not ideal an early season, fertilization can be made. Otherwise, it can be skipped.
April 25 – May 15			Overseed		Aerify or power rake before or after seeding for good seed-soil contact. With new seedings, use only preemergence products containing mesotrione or topramezone to prevent seedling damage.
June 1–15	0.5 lbs N/1000 sq.ft.	0.5 lbs N/1000 sq.ft.		Preemergence weed control – 2 nd application	
June – Sept.	Irrigate to prevent drought stress		Irrigation/sprinkler audit ⁵	Scout for dollar spot and brown patch. ⁶	⁵ Check uniformity of sprinkler output and equipment function. Turf requires 1" water/week for good growth, including both rain and irrigation. Overwatering weakens the turf. ⁶ Fungicide are not usually recommended for home lawns except in extreme cases.



June 25 – July 4				White grub control	Apply preventive insecticides if lawn has a history of white grub damage.
Aug. 15 – Sept. 15			Overseed		Aerify or power rake before seeding for better seed-soil contact.
Aug. 25 – Sept. 5	0.75–1 lbs N/ 1000 sq. ft.				
Sept 1 – Oct 15				Winter annual weed control.	For lawns with a history of winter annual weeds, such as henbit and annual bluegrass, apply a fall preemergence herbicide to kill germinating seeds.
Sept 15		0.5 – 1 lb.			One fall application with 30-50% quick release/water soluble nitrogen. This will provide even release throughout fall.
Sept. 20 – Oct. 20			Aerate ^o	Broadleaf perennial weed control	Spot spray as needed. Fall is ideal time to control broadleaf weeds. Second best time is in spring at, or shortly after, flowering of dandelions.
Oct. 15-30	0.5 lbs N/ 1000 sq.ft.	Optional - 0.25 lbs N/ 1000 sq.ft.			Only needed on new lawns or areas that are thin or have suffered pest damage.
Oct. 15 – Nov. 1			Continue mowing until grass stops growing.		

RESOURCES

Proper Lawn Aeration – <https://bit.ly/CSUaeration>

Bluegrass Billbug – <https://bit.ly/UMNbillbug>

Managing Billbugs in Turfgrass – <https://bit.ly/PUBillbug>

Broadleaf weed control – <https://go.unl.edu/NEbroadleafweed>

Brown Patch – <https://byf.unl.edu/brown-patch>

Crabgrass control – <https://go.unl.edu/NEcrabgrass>

Establishing Lawns from Seed – <https://go.unl.edu/NEturf-seed>

Improving Turf in Fall – <https://go.unl.edu/NEturf-fall>

Irrigation audit – <https://go.unl.edu/NEirrigation-audit>

Summer Patch – <https://bit.ly/PSUsummer-patch>

White Grubs – <https://bit.ly/PUwhite-grub>

AUTHORS

Sarah Browning, Horticulture Extension Educator

John Fech, Horticulture Extension Educator

Amanda Folck, Turfgrass Extension Educator, Agronomy and Horticulture

Roch Gaussoin, Turfgrass Extension Specialist, Agronomy and Horticulture