

## Tall Fescue Management Calendar

Zac J. Reicher, Extension Turfgrass Specialist; Keenan L. Amundsen, Turfgrass Geneticist;  
 Anne M. Streich, Assistant Professor of Practice; Fred P. Baxendale, Extension Entomologist; and  
 Loren J. Giesler, Extension Plant Pathologist

This calendar is a basic guide to tall fescue management in Nebraska and much of the Great Plains. Different locations and weather conditions within the region may alter dates by three weeks or more.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Fertilization</i>	<i>Cultural practices</i>	<i>Pest control</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>April</b>		Begin mowing as needed.		Mow at 3.0 to 3.5 inches as needed to avoid removing more than 1/3 of the leaf blade. Mow at this height throughout the year. Tall fescue grows aggressively in the spring, so mowing may be needed every 4 to 5 days.
<b>April 15 - May 1</b>			Apply preemergence herbicide for crabgrass control.	Most preemergence herbicides are only available with N as the carrier. Try to limit N rate to 0.75 lb N/1,000 sq ft and use products containing 25 to 50% slow release N*.
<b>May 1 - June 1</b>	0.75 lb N/1,000 sq ft			Apply nitrogen only if not applied earlier in the spring, and use products containing 25 to 50% slow release N*.
<b>June through September</b>		Irrigate to prevent drought stress.		Tall fescue is deep-rooted so likely will not require frequent irrigation, if at all during the summer. However, tall fescue has poor drought survival so water enough to prevent extended dormancy during droughts.
<b>July - August</b>			Watch for brown patch.	Brown patch is common on tall fescue lawns, especially when fertilized with more than 2.5 to 3.0 lb N/1,000 sq ft/yr and when night temperatures exceed 75°F. Fungicides are often ineffective in lawns; thus reducing annual nitrogen fertility is more effective if brown patch is a regular occurrence.
<b>July</b>			Treat for white grubs if history dictates.	White grubs rarely cause damage in tall fescue, but consider a curative application if the lawn has a history of grub damage and/or animal feeding damage.
<b>September 1-15</b>	0.75 lb N/1,000 sq ft			Use products containing 25 to 50% slow release N*. Phosphorus and/or potassium can be applied now if soil tests dictate.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Fertilization</i>	<i>Cultural practices</i>	<i>Pest control</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>September 15 - October 15</b>		Aerification		Use hollow tines for maximum reduction in compaction. Could be combined with overseeding with a blend of tall fescue if turf is thinned from summer.
<b>September 15 - October 15</b>			Apply postemergence herbicide for broad-leaf weed control.	Fall is ideal time to control broadleaf weeds. Second best time is in the spring at or shortly after flowering of dandelions.
<b>October 15 - November 1</b>	0.75 lb N/1,000 sq ft			Apply nitrogen near the last mowing and use products containing no slow release N.
<b>October 15 - November 1</b>		Continue mowing until lawn stops growing.		Continue mowing at 3.0 to 3.5 inches until lawn stops growing.

\*% slow release N = total % of slow release forms listed on the label ÷ % of total N.

More information is available at UNL's Turfgrass Science Program website: <http://turf.unl.edu/>.

**This publication has been peer reviewed.**

UNL Extension publications are available online at <http://extension.unl.edu/publications>.

**Index: Lawn & Garden  
Turf**

1981, 2004, Revised August 2012

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

© 1981-2004, 2012, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska on behalf of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension. All rights reserved.