



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

	Cool Season Turf	Warm Season Turf
Measure Your Turf	Fertilizer and Herbicides are applied at rates based on 1,000 sf. If you don't know the size of the turf, you can be over or under applying product.	
Soil Test	Every 3 years for heavy soils or annually for very sandy soils.	
Lime	Apply only if you have a current soil test indicating it's needed. This is NOT annual maintenance. Can be done anytime the ground isn't frozen.	
Compost	Can be done in Spring, Summer and/or Fall. Apply ¼ inch of compost over the entire turf area.	
Fertilizer: Spring	Avoid in most cases. Up to 0.5 lbs. N per 1,000 sf in split application, earlier in the season is better	Maybe Do not begin fertilizing until after green up
Fertilizer: Summer	NO	June – August 15 th Up to 0.7 lbs. N per 1,000 sf per 30 days
Fertilizer: Fall	September-early November Up to 0.7 lbs. N per 1,000 sf per 30 days	NO
Fertilizer – Annual Totals	1.5-2.5 lbs. N per 1,000 sf for the average home lawn	1.5-2.5 lbs. N per 1,000 sf for the average home lawn
Pre-Emergent Herbicide	Thick, high cut turf should not need it. Thinner turf may benefit from it if applied at the correct time – See below.	
Post-Emergent Herbicide	Hand pull where practical. Identify weeds to identify the most effective herbicides. Target applications based on when herbicides are most effective against target weeds.	
Insecticide	Grubs are our main turf insect problem. Check to insure 10+ grubs per sf. Treatment is only effective for late July-August with synthetic insecticides.	
Fungicide	Fungicides are usually NOT recommended for home lawns as they often do more harm to soil health than provide benefit to the turf. Pythium blight is the exception. It needs to be treated promptly.	
Aeration	September is usually ideal.	After green up in late spring/early summer.
De-Thatching	Thatch build up shouldn't reach excessive levels at low to moderate fertilization levels.	
Seeding	September to early October	Seeded varieties are not recommended.
Sodding	Sod allows a little wider window for planting than seed, but sod planted before September will need more watering and care.	Late spring/early summer is the time to sod warm season turf. Warm season sod is hard to find locally.

Seeding Cool Season Grasses

- Early September is usually the ideal time to seed in our area.
- Overseed turf at a rate of 4-6 lbs. per 1,000 sf; seed bare areas at a rate of 6-8 lbs. per 1,000 sf.
- In areas receiving 8+ hours of daily sun, a mix of tall fescue varieties or a mix of tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass varieties are recommended.
- In areas receiving 6-8 hours of daily sun, a mix of tall fescue varieties or a mix of tall and fine fescues (red/creeping red, hard and Chewings' fescues) are recommended.
- In areas receiving less than 6 hours of daily sun, alternative ground covers are recommended instead of turf.

Fertilizing Warm Season Turf

- Fertilizing warm season grasses after August 15th is not recommended as it increases the risk of winter damage.

Fertilizing Cool Season Turf

- Fall fertilization follows the SON rule – the season runs September, October and November. Avoid fertilizing after Thanksgiving.
- Application rates depend on the amount of slow-release nitrogen in the product but no more than 0.7 lbs. of nitrogen per 1,000 sf of turf is a good rule of thumb.
- Fertilizer with phosphorous should NOT be used without a current soil test recommending phosphorous. However, there are limits to how much you can apply based on the soil test – contact the Prince William Virginia Cooperative Extension office for more information

Lime

- Total Amount Needed is Based on Soil Test
- Apply a maximum of 50 lbs. per 1,000 sf per application when using Ag Lime and Dolomite
- Apply a maximum of 30 lbs. per 1,000 sf per application when using Fast Acting Lime
- When multiple applications are needed, applications need to be spaced 1-6 months apart

Pre-Emergent Herbicide

- Only use Pre-Emergent that does NOT contain Nitrogen. Reapplication may be needed.
- For crabgrass control, apply in spring between when forsythia is in full bloom and when it reaches 50% petal drop (which occurs roughly the time native dogwoods are in full bloom)
- Goose grass and foxtail typically require slightly warmer soil temperatures and usually start to germinate 1-2 weeks after crabgrass
- Japanese Stiltgrass can germinate in cooler soils and can germinate 1-2 weeks (or more) before crabgrass
- Annual bluegrass (Poa) germinates in the fall and early winter. Applications in the 1st few weeks of September are recommended. If you are overseed, most pre-emergent products will also prevent germination of turf species, consider post-emergent control with mesotrione (Tenacity) instead – contact the Prince William Virginia Cooperative Extension office for more information
- Isoxaben (Gallery) is the only product that specifically targets broadleaf weeds. Timing of application depends on target weed(s) and can be tricky to get the timing right but late August - Labor Day weekend is often the benchmark for winter weeds.

Post-Emergent Herbicide

- Follow IPM practices – Scout, Identify, Determine if Treatment is needed, Apply the Least Toxic Option
- Use Post-Emergent products that do NOT contain Nitrogen where possible.
- New turf will not have the same resistance to broadleaf herbicides as mature plants