

HOME LAWN CARE TIPS FOR LAKE TANSI VILLAGE POA MEMBERS

COURTESY OF LAKE TANSI GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE

Maintaining a nice lawn in Lake Tansi requires a season long commitment from the home owner. If a healthy, thick stand of turf is desired, many actions must occur during the span of a year. Numerous treatments are required year after year in order to maintain a healthy lawn. Expense and labor can become an issue, so dedication is crucial. Listed below are some basic suggestions and timing guidelines for home lawn care in south Cumberland County.

- **Water is the key-** Because of the type of soil in the Lake Tansi area, a lawn will not prosper without adequate moisture. Whether from irrigation or rainfall, water is the number one ingredient to maintaining healthy turf. Relying on rainfall can be risky, so a home owner that wants a nice lawn must be prepared to irrigate when necessary.
- **Mow your lawn at 3 to 4 inches-** One of the biggest mistakes in maintaining a home lawn in this geographical area is mowing turf too short. Taller cool season turf will produce deeper roots and allow for increased tillering.
- **Mow often-** Try to keep your lawn cut regularly. Removing more than a 1/3 of the grass blade can be detrimental. Also, try to reduce collecting the clippings as they will help to build organic matter in your soil profile.
- **Alternate the mowing pattern-** Try not to mow in the same direction or in the same tire paths every time you cut. Also, remember to keep your cutting blades sharp.
- **Stay off wet lawns-** Limit lawn traffic such as mowing when the ground is wet. This will help you to avoid compaction and turf damage.
- **Reduce turf stress during periods of drought-** If there is dust flying when you mow, you shouldn't be mowing. Postpone mowing until moisture levels are good. Last season during the heat and drought situation, I went 25 days without mowing my home lawn. Traffic on wilted turf is highly damaging.
- **Eliminate frost damage-** Any type of traffic on frost covered turf should be avoided.
- **Keep the weeds out-** Weeds compete with turf for growing space.

Timing guidelines

- **January** - Take soil samples. Information and materials can be obtained at the Agriculture Extension Office near the fairgrounds. Also, make plans to acquire your lawn care products for the upcoming season. We will be taking early orders for lawn care products via the internet.

- **February-** Apply pelletized lime as directed from the soil samples. A basic rule of thumb is to apply about 200 to 300 lbs. per 11,000 square feet each year.
- **March-** Pre emergent weed preventers need to be applied between March 15th and April 1st. A good rule of thumb is to make your application after the forsythias have been in full bloom for about a week. Some weed preventers come with fertilize and some do not. A healthy lawn requires less fertilize in the spring and thin lawn may need the additional fertilize. One of the biggest mistakes is to purchase and apply a “weed and Feed” thinking it will prevent weeds. “Weed and Feed” has its use but weed *prevention* is not one of them. Make sure to select a product that will prevent weeds.
- **April-** A good time to begin fertilization on lawns that are thin and need to be “pushed” with the use of fertilize. Apply 50 lbs. of 24-5-15 evenly to 11,000 square feet of turf every 6 weeks if your lawn needs a boost. Grow it and mow it.
- **April and May-** Begin broadleaf weed control with the use of weed and feed or weed-b-gon. If you need fertilization along with weed control use weed and feed. Make sure to apply it early in the morning when there is a heavy dew. This will help it to adhere to the target weeds. Weed-b-gon in a container which connects to a garden hose is the best way to eradicate broadleaf weeds in a lawn. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label. The most common broadleaf weeds are clover, dandelion, and chickweed. Mid May is also a good time to consider a grub control application.
- **June, July, and August-** Continue broadleaf weed control and begin looking for any crabgrass. Also, continue to push thin lawns with fertilize. When applying fertilize in warm temperatures (80 and above) try to make the application late in the day and when there is good chance of rain. Be on the lookout for fungi such as brown patch and dollar spot. Fungicide treatments can be made with an over the counter product such as Daconil. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label.
- **September and October-** September is the most important month when it comes to lawn maintenance in Cumberland County. Lawn aerification is a must and needs to occur each year at this time. The fall seeding window usually opens in the mid part of this month and lasts through the mid part of October. Lawns that are thin need to be re-seeded each fall until the desired results are achieved. Always do your seeding behind aerification or some other mechanical means of disrupting the soil. Seed to soil contact is a must for optimal germination. Also, for healthy lawns, this is the time when the majority (70% to 80%) of your fertilizer needs to be applied. Broadleaf weed control needs to be continued in the fall as well. We will be taking early orders for seed and fall fertilizer in the late summer so be looking for the e-mail.
- **November-** Make sure to keep the fallen leaves removed from your lawn. They block much needed sunlight and can lower your pH. Be sure to add Stabil fuel treatment to your mower’s gas tank and let the engine run for a few minutes. This will help when you begin mowing next spring. Also, plan on servicing your lawn equipment over the winter months so it will be ready to go when the weather breaks.
- **December-** Install an inflatable Santa Clause or Nativity scene in the middle of your beautiful lawn and take the rest of the month off from lawn care. Enjoy the break!