

Success Tip...

Shutting Down the Lawn for the Season

As the season winds down, there are few things we need to do for our lawns (cool season grasses) to help them not only finish the season properly, but to help get them ready for next spring!

1.) If the grass is growing, keep on mowing. As the temperatures continue to cool down, the grass will also respond to cooler air and soil temps, as well as shorter days, and slow down in its growth. But as long as it keeps growing, you need to keep mowing. We have been known to still be mowing at Thanksgiving time! So keep up the mowing schedule as needed, remembering to never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade each time you mow, change directions each time you mow, throw those clippings back into the turf when you mow, and throw those finely ground leaves back into the turf as well. Note: If you live in an area where snow mold has been a problem, feel free to lower your mowing height ½ inch (from normal) for the last 2-3 mowings. This isn't necessary in most areas as long as you keep mowing until the lawn has stopped growing, but some folks just feel better lowering the height for the last couple of mowings anyway. If the weather changes and gets cold before you get that last mow in, make sure the ground isn't frozen and the temperatures are in the mid to upper 40's or higher before you mow. If the temperatures don't get warmer, forget the last mowing. (If the grass has frost on in, stay off the grass. Walking or running equipment on frozen grass will definitely kill those grass blades.)

2.) When the lawn has pretty much stopped growing for the season, then it's time for that final feeding, using a high nitrogen fertilizer. No, this won't encourage your lawn to keep growing, but instead, keeps your lawn looking greener through the winter, and actually helps it get off to a better start next spring. Remember that the 2 feedings in the fall (September and once the lawn has shut down) are the two most important feedings you give your lawn! Note: Do not apply fertilizer to the lawn if the ground is frozen. Wait until the day time temps get into the mid to upper 40's or higher. If the temps don't warm up in the next week, forget the last feeding. Again, if you are in an area where snow mold has been a problem, feed the lawn in early to mid November.

3.) If there are leaves still falling in the lawn, make sure you keep collecting the leaves. Wet leaves left on the grass over the winter will shade and smother the grass below. Mow them back into the turf or rake and collect.

4.) When you're finished mowing for the season, take your lawn mower in and have it serviced. Do it now, rather than waiting for next spring, when everybody else wants to get their mowers serviced!

