

Realistic Down to Earth Homeowner Lawn Care Basics

Greg Grant (2019)

Watering: One inch per week (minus rainfall) preferably in a single deep soaking application during the months of June, July, and August only. Sprinkler systems should be turned off during Fall, Winter, and Spring. Watering too frequently leads to diseases like brown patch and gray leaf spot along with shallow roots.

Mowing: As often as possible, at least once per week. Frequent mowing leads to thicker grass and fewer weeds. Mow higher in shade and during summer drought.

Bermuda: Low (1 inch) mowing height

Centipede and zoysia: Medium (2 inch) mowing height

St. Augustine: High (3 inch) mowing height

Fertilizing: Use a 3:1:2 ratio lawn fertilizer (not “weed and feed”) such as 15-5-10, 21-7-14, etc. Premium/professional lawn fertilizers (such as Rozell Sprayers 18-6-12 and 21-3-12) are even better as they have both slow release and quick release nitrogen for a more even and longer lasting feeding.

Centipede: Fertilize once a year in spring (mid-April)

St. Augustine and zoysia: Fertilize twice a year, in spring and fall

Bermuda: Fertilize three times a year, in spring, summer, and fall.

Herbicides and weeds: Use pre-emergent herbicide in the spring (typically around mid-February but could be March 1 during prolonged winter) for warm season summer weeds like crabgrass and spurge. Use pre-emergent during the fall (around September 1) for cool season winter weeds like henbit, chickweed, and bur weed. Use a broadleaf weed killer such as Trimec or Weed-B-Gone for Southern grasses for post-emergent control of weeds. These herbicides contain 2,4-D, Dicamba, and Mecoprop and work best when the weeds are actively growing and when sprayed on the weeds. Must be very careful to avoid drift to flowers, vegetables, and other non-target plants.

Diseases: Reduce irrigation to once a week during the summer only as diseases need a film of water on the grass to get started. Always water when the leaves can dry quickly. Do not water at night. Diseases have to be prevented not cured. Too much fertilizer and too much water leads to disease. Fungicides only protect healthy grass; they don't cure diseased grass. Refer to publications for product and the label for rates.