

Caring for Your Bermudagrass

March through August

The following information has been adapted directly from NC State's internet publication TurfFiles. The information has been filtered to provide the information you need to complement the services we provide for you. If you wish to view this reference, go to <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/pubs/management/ag431.html> . You can also reference TurfFiles at www.turffiles.ncsu.edu .

Mowing

The preferred mower for bermudagrass is a reel mower set at 3/4 to 1", before it is no higher than 1.5" to 2". Most lawn mowers are rotary mowers. Set your rotary mower as low as your lawn will allow without scalping. Recycle your clippings since twenty-five per cent of your nutrients are in the clippings. Even if you get behind with your mowing collect the clippings for mulch. But don't send them to the landfill.

Watering

Water to a soil depth of four to six inches. Use a screwdriver to probe the soil to determine moisture depth. Bermudagrass requires 1 to 1.25" per week of rainfall or irrigation. If you have a clay soil, your soil will not accept water as quickly. If you see runoff, delay your watering to allow it to soak and then resume your irrigation until you achieve the depth or amount needed. Use a rain gauge to determine rainfall amounts. You can also use a pan or pie tin to collect irrigation water. Then calculate the amount your sprinkler delivers to achieve the weekly rainfall you would need to augment the week's rainfall. A good watering program will help keep your lawn healthy and mitigate pest, disease, and weed problems.

Aeration

Athletic field managers aerate their Bermudagrass fields monthly and some soccer fields are aerated weekly during the soccer season. Hopefully, your lawn does not have as much traffic, but an aeration in early spring can be extremely beneficial for delivering nutrients, water and oxygen to your turf's roots.

Thatch

Thatch is the layer of dead (undecayed) grass at the surface of your lawn. Thatch is beneficial in the winter to protect your turf from cold. Thatch in the summer and spring prevent water and nutrients from reaching your lawn. If the thatch layer is more than 0.5", it should be removed.

Pests

White grub worm control is best performed during two periods: 1) March/April prior to hatching into beetles and 2) August after eggs have been laid and grubs are closest to the soil surface. The presence of moles is an indicator that you may have grubs since they are an excellent food source.

Check for Red Imported Fire Ant mounds. It is important to treat these pests as soon as you discover them to prevent liability risks and to slow their spread to other areas. Fire ants damage plants and have been known to chew through power and communication lines.