

# SOUTHERN LAWN TIMES



A Monthly E-Newsletter for Father and Son Pest and Lawn Solutions  
May 2024

## What we are doing this month and why

This month we will begin to apply our **warm season fertilizer formula that contains nitrogen**. Nitrogen encourages top growth and green color. In addition to nitrogen, this formula also contains phosphorus and potassium as well as many minor nutrients the grass needs to be healthy! We are also continuing to apply **pre-emergent weed control** to suppress weeds. We will apply **pre-emergent weed control** throughout the year to keep constant pressure on weed populations. We are also applying **post emergent weed control** to control actively growing weeds.

The only turf destroying insect that is active at this time is **mole crickets** and we will treat them as needed.

**Disease** is most active between 70° and 80°. We will keep a close eye out for disease activity as we transition from spring into summer and apply **fungicide** as needed when we notice disease activity occurring.

## HOW TO RECOGNIZE DROUGHT STRESS IN YOUR LAWN

We are currently in a dry weather pattern with warm temperatures, low humidity and no rain. Under these conditions, drought stress may show up in your lawn even though you are watering.

Drought stress usually appears as irregular patches of grass in the lawn that are a bluish gray color that eventually turn brown. Other indications of drought stress are the individual blades of the grass folding together as well as the soil in those areas is powdery dry.



## WHAT IS THIS GREEN STUFF THAT GROWS ON THE WOODY PARTS OF TREES

This is called lichen (pronounced liken). It's an interesting organism that derives all of its moisture and nutrition from the air and attaches itself to trees and other other objects simply as a growing base (our church steeple has lichen attached to it).

Lichen takes nothing from the trees it attaches to and is in no other way harmful. However, a lot of lichen on a tree does indicate the tree may be unhealthy since lichen does not thrive on a tree with dense foliage and the natural growth of the tree would tend to regularly dislodge lichen.

Very few sprinkler systems provide perfect coverage over the entire lawn and during drought conditions, gaps in irrigation coverage will start to show up. Just because the grass is getting wet doesn't mean it is getting enough water to keep it out of drought stress.

Here are some things to do if areas of your lawn are showing drought stress:

1. Increase the time and frequency of irrigation cycles. In drought conditions watering every day for 45 minutes to an hour may be necessary.
2. Replace existing sprinkler head nozzles with larger nozzles that distribute a greater volume of water to the area the sprinkler is covering.
3. Adjust sprinkler heads for maximum efficiency.
4. Add additional sprinkler heads or entire zones to the irrigation system

## HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE CAN AERATING YOUR LAWN MAKE?

We are passionate about finding the best ways to improve lawns along the Emerald Coast!

One of our supervisors aerated half his lawn last year to see how much aerating actually improved its condition. Here are pictures taken this week from sections that were aerated twice last year (May and August) and areas not aerated at all.

As you can see, the aerated section came out of dormancy much quicker and is much greener than the non aerated section. Therefore we can conclude aeration has a significant affect on the health of the grass not only when it is performed, but also the following growing season!



## WATERING INSTRUCTIONS

At the time of this writing, we are in a dry weather pattern with high pressure, low humidity and no significant rain in the forecast. Under these conditions, most lawns will require irrigating **4 to 5 times per week at 45 minutes per zone** to stay out of drought stress. The best time of day to apply irrigation is while the dew is still on the ground, **between midnight and 8 AM**. This way, you're not extending the number of hours in the day the grass is wet. The longer the grass is wet, the more likely disease activity will occur.