

WARM SEASON LAWN CARE

As we approach the summer season, there are many things to do that will aid and help our lawns to be improved. The most important things are: **Dethatching, Aeration, Fertilization** and **Proper Watering**.

Thatch is made up of leaves, stems and roots that have not yet composted. Thatch can be found along the soil lines of walks and flower beds. When it is more than ½ inch thick, it should be removed. If it is less than ½", it will not significantly harm turfgrass. In small yards, if the thatch is just 1" thick, it can usually be removed by using a hand-rake. However, if the thatch is over 1 inch thick, you may need to consider renting equipment designed for dethatching or hire a professional yard person. It has been found that Fescue lawns (cool season grasses) usually do not need dethatching, but it's always a good practice to check your yard.

Aerification is a process used to reduce the compaction of soil. Over the years of having lawns in the same place the soil becomes compacted and the aeration process becomes beneficial. The process is the removal of soil in ½ to 1 inch diameter holes and approximately 2 inches deep. This is usually done by professionals; however, rental equipment is available. If the soil is severely compacted, watering should be applied 2-4 days before aerification. After aerification, a lawn mower can be used to chop up the cores of dirt and grass caused by aeration.

Fertilization rates and dates will vary depending on the type of grass. Bermuda Grass fertilization generally runs from April to August for Quick Release and April, June, and August for slow release. For Fescues and Ryes, the optimum time is once or twice in spring, March and April, and twice in the fall, September and November. The fall fertilizations are the most important. Unless a soil sample shows that Phosphorus (P) or Potassium (K) is needed, all that is generally needed is Nitrogen (N). Look for fertilizer products with 0-0 on the end numbers (such as 22-0-0 or 33-0-0) and always follow the instructions on the bag.

Watering is a very important part of lawn care. The irrigation of the grass should be on an infrequent time schedule so as to allow water to penetrate deep into the ground, coaxing roots to do the same. To determine how well the watering schedule is doing, dig down about 6" and check the wetness of the soil. If it is dry, increase watering times. A rain gauge can help in determining the proper amount of water on the lawn.

Additional resources include OSU Fact Sheet [HLA-6420](#) and [Bermuda Grass Lawn Maintenance Calendar](#). Other lawn resources are available online at www.tulsamastergardeners.org. Look under "Lawn & Garden Help".