

Preparing Warm Weather Lawns For Cold Weather

Summer draws to a close and we can begin to feel just a bit of Fall in the air. With the generally milder temperatures and the rainfall we received this summer, our lawns should be green and healthy. Now, it is time to think what we should do for our lawns over winter.

Overall, this summer was mild. Still, warm weather grasses should have been cut long to aid in temperature control and moisture conservation. It is time to slightly lower the cutting height of turf grasses for fall. Shorter grass will make it easier to remove leaves and give a neater dormant appearance. Also, by cutting the grass shorter, one can get a more consistent coverage when applying a pre-emergent weed killer.

Through the summer months, it is best to mulch the lawn clippings back into the yard using a good mulching blade. This mulch helps with water retention and adds some nitrogen back into the soil. But, this time of year consider bagging. Don't be tempted to send the bags of clippings to the landfill but, rather, compost it. Bag and compost for two reasons. First, it provides greens/nitrogen to your compost pile. The leaves that provide the browns/carbon are right around the corner. Secondly, by doing this you are picking up any weeds that might be going to seed. When the clippings are put into compost and become properly heated, the heat from the composting process will kill the weeds and any seeds.

Consider anything that will stimulate growth such as fertilizer, de-thatching, aerating, and the like. ALL of these actions should be avoided now as new, tender growth that may be stimulated by such could be damaged by an early cold snap.

Also, remember water! The winter months can be dry. While we may not see green grass growing, the root systems are still viable and need moisture. While the need for water is not as great as during the active growing season, give your lawn about $\frac{1}{2}$ " per week during dry spells. Be sure to remember to disconnect your hose during freezing weather!

A very informative **Bermudagrass maintenance schedule**, which works for all warm weather turfgrasses, can be found on the Master Gardener website (tulsamastergardener.org). Click on "Lawn and Garden" help section, then "Turfgrass".

Also, the following OSU Fact Sheets provide additional information about turfgrasses.

[L-437 Turfgrass Management in Oklahoma » OSU Fact Sheets](#)

[HLA-6408 Landscape Maintenance Schedule » OSU Fact Sheets](#)

[L-441 Bermudagrass Lawn Management Calendar » OSU Fact Sheets](#)