

September 11, 2020  
Rochester Sentinel Article  
Lawn Care

As we near the November election for president, it is time for me to throw my hat into the ring. I will be running on a one item platform, which will be to declare September, National Lawn Month. Virtually all the things you need to do for a successful lawn need to occur in September.

This is the most important month to fertilize a lawn. The cool season grasses that make up our lawns are now starting to store up nutrients into their roots for winter survival. A shot of nitrogen fertilizer in September will help those roots get bigger and stronger. I like a product that has a slow release nitrogen and the first number on the bag is in the high 20's or low 30's. This treatment could be followed by another round of fertilizer about the first week of November. It is still warm enough at that time for root growth to continue well into the late fall.

From mid-August to early September is also the best time to seed a lawn. This allows warm weather for the grass seed to germinate. The grass will then respond with root formation during the cool fall weather. There are a lot of choices for species of grass, but I still prefer bluegrass for home lawns.

Have you ever looked into core aeration? This is a system that takes plugs of grass out of the lawn and lays them on top. After doing this, it is recommended to throw some seed over the top, the seeds will fall down into those holes and germinate. These aeration machines can be rented or someone can be hired to do this process. All the ball parks and football fields have this done multiple times. Aeration could be done now if your lawn is not too hard from the dry weather.

Lawn weed control is best accomplished in the fall. Just like the grass puts its growth in the roots, dandelions, buckhorn and other perennial weeds are storing their nutrients for winter. A fall herbicide treatment will work a lot better than one done in the spring. Research studies at Purdue showed that spraying herbicides on weeds worked the best in the month of October. Late September is close enough to give it a try. It is most important to apply the chemical when there is adequate soil moisture for weed growth.

I have been saying that September should be National Lawn Month for nearly 30 years. Several years back I found out there is a National Lawn Month, April. It seems as though the people who want to sell you fertilizer in the spring have gotten the upper hand, which is sad. The only thing I would do to my lawn in April is mow and maybe put down a crabgrass preventer without fertilizer. Early spring fertilization promotes diseased lawns, I have seen this consistently for 35 years. So, in the time leading up to the November election, get out and take care of your lawn. I am Mark Kepler and I endorse this action.

Mark Kepler

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