



# Care of St. Augustine & Bermuda Lawns in the Brazos Valley

Cultural practices, particularly fertilization, largely determine lawn quality, which is generally measured in terms of color, density, and uniformity. A fertilization program should include timely applications of fertilizer in amounts and formulations that meet the requirements of your lawn. Common sense and refraining from "over doing" is one of the main keys to successful lawn maintenance. Over fertilizing even once can cause many problems, including:

1. An over-abundance of grass foliage to mow, which in turn creates thatch buildup on the lawn.
2. Thatch accumulation provides a refuge for insects and fungus spores.
3. Over fertilizing weakens the grass and makes it more susceptible to damage from insects and disease.

Grass clippings can be caught, raked, or allowed to decompose to prevent heavy thatch buildup. But over fertilizing causes lawn grasses to grow too quickly, requiring frequent

mowing and subsequent thatch buildup. Or a homeowner will cut too much of the grass blade, which is difficult to decompose in the lawn, leading to increased insect and disease damage, as well as poor cold tolerance.

Poor timing of fertilizer application also increases the likelihood of chinch bug brown patch problems in St. Augustine grass lawns. Use the chart in below to aid in identifying any other problems you may encounter.

Environmental conditions, such as shade, soil type, and rainfall also influence fertilizer requirements. Moderately or heavily shaded areas should not be fertilized as much as grass in full sunlight.

Grass growing in shade is more succulent and has a weaker root system than grass growing in full sunlight. Turfgrass growing in sandy soils requires more frequent applications of nitrogen than those growing in heavy soils. Lawns in areas subject to high rainfall require more total pounds of nitrogen per year than lawns grown under dry conditions.

## LAWN PROBLEMS

SYMPTOM	TIME	CAUSE	SOLUTION
Large dead circles	Early spring Early fall	Brown Patch Fungus ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> )	Terrachlor Control: Bayleton
Small, ash colored bubbles on grass blades	After time of high moisture	Slime Mold Fungus ( <i>Physarium cinereum</i> )	Control: Wash or brush away - Daconil
Powdery substance on grass blades	After time of high moisture	Powdery mildew ( <i>Erysiphe graminis</i> )	Control: Bayleton
Loss of vigor; blotchy streaking in leaf-blades	Growing season	St. Augustine Decline Virus	Control: Plant resistant varieties like 'Raliegh', Humore Product
Large, yellow or brown discolored area	Summer dry period	Chinch bugs ( <i>Blissus insularis</i> )	Control: Diazinon, Sevin, Delta Eight, Killa Bug II
Areas of dead grass that seem to have little remaining root system	Spring and Summer	White grubs ( <i>Phyllophaga spp.</i> )	Preventative: Diazinon (June) Control: Diazinon, Dylox
Mounds of soil	Anytime	Ants (Formicidae Family)	Control: Diazinon Baits: Ocephate, Fipronil

## FERTILIZER APPLICATIONS

Timing and distribution of fertilizer applications are important considerations in a lawn fertilization program. Timing applications to correspond to grass requirements rather than to the convenience of the homeowner can reduce maintenance problems (see chart below).

Lawns require supplemental applications of nitrogen at 45 to 60 day intervals between spring and fall fertilizations. These applications should not exceed one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft per application. Slow release nitrogen should be used on St. Augustine during the summer, since soluble nitrogen sources increase lawn susceptibility to chinch bugs. Heirloom Gardens 21-7-14 Premium Fertilizer contains over 40% slow release nitrogen to reduce nitrogen runoff and leaching and to lower lawn susceptibility to insects and diseases.

St. Augustine lawns may require periodic application of iron chelate to prevent iron chlorosis. These applications may be needed several times during the growing season. Iron chelate should be applied according to the manufacturer's directions. Fertilizers should be distributed with a broadcast (cyclone type) spreader. Uniform distribution is essential to prevent light and dark streaks across the lawn.

## HEIRLOOM GARDENS LAWN FERTILIZING PROGRAM

Heirloom Gardens 21-7-14 Premium Lawn Fertilizer is specifically formulated in a 3-1-2 ratio for the soils of the Brazos Valley, as outlined by Texas turf experts.

Planned applications are necessary for optimum lawn vigor, health and beauty. To receive the most pleasure from your lawn, Heirloom Gardens recommends that you follow this program. Shown are the recommended ratios of Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium.

	Heavy Soils	Sandy Soils
<b>St. Augustine Grass</b>		
mid-late February	3-1-2	3-1-2
mid-late May	3-1-2	3-1-2
mid-late June	3-1-2	3-1-2
mid-late September	3-1-2	3-1-2
<b>Common Bermuda Grass</b>		
mid-late February	3-1-2	3-1-2
late April; mid May	3-1-2	21-0-0
mid-late June	3-1-2	3-1-2
early-mid September	3-1-2	3-1-2
<b>Hybrid Bermuda Grass (Tifway, Tifgreen, Tifdwarf)</b>		
mid-late February	3-1-2	3-1-2
late April, mid May	21-0-0	21-0-0
mid-late June	3-1-2	3-1-2
mid-late July	3-1-2	21-0-0
mid-late September	3-1-2	3-1-2

For other fertilizing needs or turf problems, see an Heirloom Gardens Texas Certified Nursery Professional.