



Yards in Bloom

Fall 2011

Fulton County Lawn & Garden News

Lawn Care

Fall is the best time to make major changes to your yard. September and October are best to fertilize, seed, and do most landscaping.

Fall is the best time to fertilize lawns because it will strengthen the plant from the roots up. This will cause it to make it through the winter easier – and it will be greener than any of your neighbors' lawns!

For nitrogen (N), you'll need to apply 1-1.5 pounds of N per 1000 square feet. Now you'll have to do some simple calculations for this. If you use Ammonium Nitrate and its composition is 34-0-0, then you'll need 4.5 pounds of actual fertilizer per 1000 sq ft. This is how you calculate the fertilizer equivalent. Take the amount of nutrient (N for example) needed and divide by the percent of that nutrient in the fertilizer in decimal form (34% = 0.34).

$$\frac{1.5}{0.34} = 4.5 \text{ lb/1000 sq ft}$$

When applying fertilizer, you mainly need N. Phosphorus (P) and Potassium (K) should only be applied according to your soil test results. See "Soil Testing" below for more information. If you have a hard time with the calculations above, just let me know and I'll help.

When seeding, make sure to use Tall Fescue. KY 31 is the old stand-by, but a turf-type tall fescue like Falcon IV, for example, will give you the best looking, smoothest lawn possible.

As you seed, use no more than 3-4 lbs per 1000 square feet. There are 43,560 sq ft in an acre, so an entire acre would use a total of 130.68 pounds:

$$\frac{43,560}{1000} \times 3 = 130.68$$

Landscaping, too, is better in the Fall. The outside temperature usually isn't as high and it's also pretty dry. Weed all of your flower beds, plant all your trees and shrubs, and fertilize as needed. Planting trees and shrubs now will encourage root growth over the winter (so you don't have to water as much next spring!).

There is only one thing to wait on until spring: Mulch.

If you keep to these recommendations, no doubt your yard will be the envy of the neighborhood!

Soil Testing

Soil testing is a way for you to keep up-to-date on your lawn/garden. A soil test will allow you to apply the nutrients that are needed, which could reduce the overall amount of fertilizer you use.

There are just a few steps involved in taking a soil sample from your lawn. You will need some tools to do this. They are:

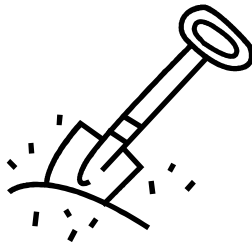
1. Soil Probe, Spade, or Shovel
2. Bucket (to mix soil in)
3. Soil Test Box
4. Soil Test Form

Numbers 3 and 4 you'll get from me at the Extension office.

Now, the steps you need to take to have an accurate soil test.

1. Use the probe/spade/shovel to dig down four inches into the soil.
2. Collect from 10 areas in the yard.
3. Mix all soil in bucket.
4. After mixing, pour soil into soil test box until full.
5. Fill out soil test form and discard extra soil.
6. Bring to your local Extension office.

Soil Samples usually take about 7-10 days to process the results. Cost is \$5 per sample.



Banana/Pecan Festival

This year, we are setting up a booth at each festival. Come on out and see us; we'll have lots of great things to see! Get more information at:

<http://www.thebananafestival.com>

<http://www.hickmankytourism.com/festival.htm>

Composting Yard Waste

Fall is the perfect time to begin to compost in your yard since it is the time when leaves begin to fall off the trees. Composting is a simple process that can allow you to add nutrients back to your yard or garden with little to no expense.

Anything organic can be composted. However, it's best to avoid items such as meat, eggs, cheese, or bones. These items will attract varmints into your yard like stray dogs and cats along with rats, voles, and even a stray coyote or two.

Just build a bin or two and fill with leaves, grass clippings, etc. You may need

to add some nitrogen fertilizer if all you have in the bin is leaves. Let this go for a couple months, turning the pile regularly.

You'll know when the pile is finished composting when it looks like loose soil and crumbles easily.

To Do List...

- Water newly planted trees and shrubs to ensure sufficient moisture
- Plant pansies, flowering kale, flowering cabbage, and fall mums to give color to the garden when summer flowers have faded
- Spring flowering bulbs may be planted after soil temperature drops below 60 OF
- Clean houseplants, check for insects, and repot, if necessary, before bringing them indoors



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