

TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO PROPER LAWN CARE

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The battle against weeds and insects in your home lawn can be frustrating, often ending in surrender and defeat. However, with the proper information and a little hard work they can most often be easily controlled and ultimately prevented.

The first step to effectively caring for your lawn is to determine which species of Turfgrass is planted at your home. The most common species seen in home lawns today include Bermuda, Centipede, and St. Augustine while a few newer homes may be planted with Zoysia. It is incredibly important to positively identify which Turfgrass species you have at your home, as each of these grass species have different cultural needs. Each species varies in how often they require fertilizer, what chemicals they can tolerate and in what light conditions they best perform. The same chemical and fertilizer schedule that your neighbor is using to keep his Bermuda grass lawn lush and green in the summer and free of weeds in the winter could easily weaken and ultimately kill your Centipede lawn.

After you have effectively identified what species of lawn you have growing at your home there are a number of places you can look to find information on how to properly care for it each season throughout the year. The North Carolina State University Center for Environmental Research and Education has an excellent website, www.turffiles.ncsu.edu, containing a plethora of information regarding turf pests, diseases and most importantly a species specific turf management program detailing how to care for your lawn throughout the year. This information is also available at local chemical and landscape supply stores such as John Deere Landscapes (Clement's Ferry Road) and Possum's Landscape Supply (Long Point Road) whose contact information is listed below.

Just as important as effectively identifying your lawns species is identifying what problems you are having with it. If you have weeds that you want to get rid of take a sample to one of your local landscape suppliers along with the knowledge of your turf species to ensure that you get the correct information on what needs to be done to eliminate this weed in your lawn. The different weed species growing in your yard can be a great diagnostic tool to determine the overall health of your lawn. For example, clover and annual bluegrass, which we see most predominantly in the winter, almost always indicate soil compaction. We can alleviate soil compaction through aeration to reduce the negative effects of foot traffic, lawn mowers and vehicles on the turf's root system. Annual bluegrass can be prevented through the use of a pre-emergent applied in the fall while clover is one of many weeds pre-emergent will not help prevent. Correctly identifying your lawn's problems can help you develop a plan of action to treat and prevent your specific problem in the future. You can aerate when the turf is actively growing in the early summer, apply pre-emergent in the fall to prevent annual bluegrass and then spot spray any clover that is not successfully prevented by aeration and pre-emergent application.

The same principles used to diagnose and treat turf weed problems can be applied to insect and fungus problems. Drench your lawn in multiple locations with one ounce dishwashing liquid to one gallon water and see what insects are drawn to the surface. Identify what insects you see or take them to your landscape supply store and find out if they are detrimental to the health of your lawn. If you do in fact have an insect problem you will have all of the information needed to determine what route you should take to eliminate your pest problem.

John Deere Landscapes
843-216- 1788

Possum's Landscape Supply
843-971-9601