

Bermudagrass Maintenance Calendar

This calendar of suggested management practices is designed to be a general guide in the care of your bermudagrass lawn. Many factors such as location, soil type, and microenvironment will affect the performance of your lawn. For these reasons, the following management practices and dates may need to be adjusted to suit your particular home lawn conditions.

March Through May

Mowing: Bermudagrass performs best when mowed between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Begin mowing as soon as the lawn turns green in spring. Always leave the clippings on the lawn in a practice called 'grass-cycling'. Grass clippings decompose quickly and do not contribute to thatch. If prolonged rain or other factors prevent frequent mowing and clippings begin to clump, they can be collected and used as mulch. For more information on mowing, refer to [HGIC 1205, *Mowing Lawns*](#).

Fertilizing: Apply $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 square feet several weeks after complete green-up. Submit a soil sample to determine nutrient and lime requirements. In the absence of a soil test, use a slow-release, complete nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) turf fertilizer with a 4-1-2 ratio such as 16-4-8. Apply lime if suggested.

To determine the amount of product needed to apply 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, divide 100 by the first number in the fertilizer ratio. For example, for a 16-4-8 fertilizer, divide 100 by 16. The result is 6.25 pounds of fertilizer per 1,000 square feet ($100/16 = 6.25$ of 16-4-8). For more information on fertilizing lawns refer to [HGIC 1201, *Fertilizing Lawns*](#).

Irrigation: As a general rule, irrigate when 30 to 50 percent of the lawn shows sign of wilt. Probe with a screwdriver to ensure the top 4 to 6 inches of soil are moist following irrigation. Do not irrigate again until the lawn shows sign of wilt. In general, bermudagrass needs a total weekly application of about 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches of water. Sandy soils often require more frequent watering, for example, $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch of water every third or fourth day. For more information on watering lawns refer to [HGIC 1207, *Watering Lawns*](#).

Weed Control: Apply preemergence herbicides to control summer annual weeds when forsythia or redbuds are in full bloom. Apply postemergence herbicides in May as needed to control summer annual and perennial broadleaf weeds. Be sure that the product is labeled for use on bermudagrass. Postemergence herbicides are applied when weeds are present, and at least three weeks after the lawn has greened up. For more information on weed control refer to [HGIC 2310, *Managing Weeds in Warm Season Lawns*](#).

Thatch Removal: Vertically mow in May to remove the thatch after the lawn becomes green, but only if the thatch is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick. After dethatching, irrigate with $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch of water. Fertilize with 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet if the lawn has not already been fertilized.

Renovation: Replant large bare areas using sod or sprigs (3 to 5 bushels per 1,000 square feet). Common bermudagrass can be seeded using hulled bermudagrass at 1 to 2 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Do not seed hybrid bermudagrass lawns with common bermudagrass. Use sod or sprigs of the existing hybrid instead.

June Through August

Mowing: Bermudagrass performs best when mowed between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Fertilizing: Apply $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet every 4 to 8 weeks.

Irrigation: As a general rule, irrigate when 30 to 50% of the lawn shows sign of wilt. In general, bermudagrass needs a total weekly application of about 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches of water.

Insect Control: August is the best time to control white grubs because they are small and close to the soil surface. Mole crickets will begin to hatch in June. Use a soap flush technique to determine if mole crickets are present. For details on the soap flush technique, see [EHS/TO-1, Mole Cricket Management for the Home Lawn](#).

Weed Control: Apply postemergence herbicides as needed to control summer annual and perennial weeds. For more information on weed control, see [HGIC 2310, Managing Weeds in Warm Season Lawns](#).

Thatch Removal: Vertically mow to remove the thatch if it is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. It normally is best to vertically mow in spring whenever possible.

September Through November

Mowing: Mow the lawn between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches until several weeks before the first expected frost. Raise the mowing height by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch as winter approaches if the lawn will not be overseeded. Mowing height is usually raised in mid to late September in the Piedmont and early October in other areas.

Fertilization: In September, if a soil test reports deficient potassium (K) levels, apply 1 pound of potash (K₂O) per 1000 square feet, using muriate of potash (0-0-60), potassium sulfate (0-0-50), or Sul-Po-Mag (0-0-22).

Irrigation: Irrigate when 30 to 50% of the lawn shows sign of wilt. In general, bermudagrass needs a weekly application of about 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches of water. Dormant bermudagrass may need to be

watered periodically when dry, warm, windy weather prevails.

Weed Control: Apply preemergence or postemergence herbicides as needed to control winter annual and perennial broadleaf weeds. Preemergence herbicides are most effective when applied as nighttime temperatures drop into the upper 50s. Preemergence herbicides do not control existing perennial weeds. Apply postemergence herbicides only when weeds are present. Do not apply herbicides designed to control annual bluegrass if the lawn is to be overseeded with ryegrass.

Insect Control: Continue to monitor for white grubs and control if necessary.

Overseeding: Overseeding with ryegrass for winter color should be done in mid September in mountain and Piedmont areas, and early October in coastal areas.

December Through February

Mowing: Mow overseeded bermudagrass at 1 inch before the grass gets taller than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Do not collect the clippings unless they accumulate heavily on the surface. Dormant bermudagrass that has not been overseeded need not be mowed.

Overseed Fertilization: Do not fertilize bermudagrass that has not been overseeded. Apply $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of N per 1,000 square feet in December and February to overseeded bermudagrass.

Irrigation: Dormant bermudagrass may have to be watered periodically to prevent desiccation, especially when warm, windy weather prevails. Watering is particularly important for lawns that have been overseeded.

Weed Control: Apply broadleaf herbicides as needed to control winter weeds such as chickweed, henbit, and hop clover. Selective herbicides can be applied in November or December to lawns that have not been overseeded to control annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) and several winter annual broadleaf weeds.

This information is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is implied. All recommendations are for South Carolina conditions and may not apply to other areas. Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. All recommendations for pesticide use are for South Carolina only and were legal at the time of publication, but the status of registration and use patterns are subject to change by action of state and federal regulatory agencies. Follow all directions, precautions and restrictions that are listed.