COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT, LEXINGTON, KY 40546

September 2014

HORTICULTURE

UK UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Cooperative Extension Service

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Fall Lawns

Home lawn problems have been the number one question at the Extension Office the last several weeks. Crabgrass and patch diseases have been especially problematic for many homeowners. Crabgrass is an annual grassy weed that will die out at the first frost or cold snap. It seeds prolifically in July and has tremendous survival reproductive capabilities. It is best controlled by two applications of specific herbicides, appropriately timed in the early spring. During the summer months, these herbicides do little to control it.

Certain patch diseases and other problems of turf have also been a problem this summer, primarily due to high heat and high humidity. These will be small dead areas in your lawn, sometimes with a greasy look, or a light, white, cottony substance on the leaf blade, seen in the morning. Lawn diseases can have several signs to alert you to a problem. There are also other lawn diseases that are favored in cooler or dryer weather. There are very few lawn fungicides available or recommended for homeowners to combat these problems.

Both of these problems are aggravated by excess application of fertilizers; poor timing of fertilizers; too much irrigation; irrigation applied incorrectly; too low

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Know You Pests and Recognize Their Enemies: Lacewings

While scouting for pests or during field walks with growers I often see more beneficial insects than pests. One of the more underappreciated groups of beneficial insects is green lacewings. Despite their fragile appearance, green lacewings are valuable natural enemies of insect pests in the field, attacking many types of soft-bodied insects and insect eggs. Natural enemies of crop pests help to slow the rate at which pest populations build in numbers, much of the time preventing them from reaching an economic injury level.

Figure 1. The numerous cross veins in the wings give lacewings their common name. (Photo: Ric Bessin, UK)

Green lacewings are weak fliers and are commonly found near aphid colonies or other insect prey. They are almost an inch long, green in

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or too high mowing height; or planting grass species that is not resistant to disease.
The best way to control crabgrass, broadleaf weeds, and lawn disease is to properly manage your lawn. Fertilization only in the fall; watering a maximum of 1" per week (which includes rainfall); watering deeply and infrequently; mowing regularly and keeping the grass blade height between 2"-3"; and choosing the right grass species that are appropriate for Central Kentucky lawns, will all be the best way to keep your lawn looking its best. Fortunately, lawn renovation time is upon us.

Between August 15-September 30th is the prime time to seed, sod, or just start all over again if you must! The following information will get you thinking about renovation and the best way to get your lawn in shape for next year.

There are several steps to lawn renovation. These are: appropriate grass variety selection, eliminating weed competition, proper timing of the renovation, proper seedbed preparation, and using correct seed planting methods.

- The "right" grass for your lawn may not be the one you like best, but will be the one most suited to our Central Kentucky climate. Turf type tall fescue is the grass of choice for our area. Bermuda, zoysia, Bluegrass, and ryegrasses all have issues that may not be best for your lawn.
- Germinating grass seedlings cannot compete with an aggressively growing weed. For a total kill of the entire area, use a nonselective herbicide like glyphosate (Roundup Pro, Kleenup) or glufosinate (Finale). For other weeds use a selective herbicide for the specific weed. Or you can mow the turf as close as possible before renovating. Or heavily dethatching or thinning the lawn by going across it several times with a lawn dethatcher/verticut machine will reduce the competition for new grass seedlings.
- Timing is critical in renovation of lawns. As mentioned before, the best time to renovate is mid-August through September. Sod can be installed almost anytime there is adequate soil moisture and the sod is available for purchase.
- Good soil to seed contact is necessary in renovation of lawns. Seeds that lodge in grooves made by hand raking or with special machines, such as dethatchers or slit-seeders, are much more likely to germinate and develop. To properly plant the seed by hand or using a spreader, evenly broadcast seed at a rate of 6 pounds per 1,000 square feet for tall fescue varieties. Rake the seed lightly into the seedbed or cross the area again with a dethatching machine.
- After seeding plenty of water is a must! Thoroughly soak the newly seeded area until about one inch of water has been applied. Remember that rain counts as irrigation. Be sure not to use fan or oscillating sprinklers during the heat of the day, as most of your water will evaporate before reaching the ground. Also be sure water is directed on the lawn and not on your driveway, sidewalk, street, or roof of your house. Do not water at night as this can cause lawn disease problems to develop.
- Once the grass is established, mow as frequently as needed to keep the old grass or weeds from shading the new seedlings. As the new seedlings develop, continue mowing to keep the height of the grass between 2" to 3". Do not let the seedlings grow tall before mowing.

For more detailed information regarding lawn establishment and maintenance, log on to: http://www.uky.edu/Ag/ukturf/HomeLawnCare.htm. For information on crabgrass, log on to: http://www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/pubs/AY-10.pdf. ☼

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color, and have two hemispherical golden eyes. They get their name from the lace-like appearance of their wings due to the numerous cross veins. As adults, some species feed mostly on nectar, pollen, and honeydew, but other species feed on insects. The egg stage is quite different from other insect eggs; each lacewing egg is perched on a ½-inch hair -like stalk. Larvae are voracious predators and are often called aphid lions. They are brown and white and may grow up to about ½ inch in length. The larval stage is the most beneficial stage; larvae feed on soft-bodied insects like aphids, but will also feed on caterpillars and some beetles.

Figure 2. Lacewing larvae feed with long sickle-shaped mandibles. (Photo: Ric Bessin, UK)

Lacewings can be purchased commercially either as eggs or larvae. Releasing either of these stages has the benefit that they will not move far to find prey, unlike what might happen when winged adults are released.

Ric Bessin, Extension Entomologist ☼

Home Hort Hints

Rick Durham, Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky

- Remove fallen fruit and leaves from beneath fruit trees**.** Many insects and diseases that plague home fruit production spend the winter on fallen fruit and leaves. So raking up any fallen fruit and leaves will help reduce the incidence of fruit pest next year. Composting these materials will both eliminate the pest problem and provide good organic matter that can be used elsewhere in the garden.
- September is the time to divide existing or plant new perennials such as bearded iris, daylilies, peonies, and phlox. Many perennials either produce fewer blooms or fail to bloom altogether when they become too crowded. To divide, loosen the soil around the clump and gently lift the plants. Shake off excess soil so that the growth pattern is apparent. Divisions should contain some of the edges of the clump (most recent growth) and contain two or three stems or groups of leaves. The stems or leaves should be cut back to about 2 to 3 inches long and also cut back any damaged roots. Plant these divisions in newly worked soil at about the same depth they were growing in the garden.
- Pumpkins and winter squash should be harvested when the skin is tough and can not be easily damaged with your fingernail. The squash and pumpkins can be left in the field as long as there are vines or other vegetation to shield them from direct sunlight, but move them to a protected cool, dry place once freezing temperatures occur.

If you still have an itch to do some vegetable gardening, there's still time to get in a few more crops. Mustard greens, turnips (as well as turnip greens), spinach, and leaf lettuce will all do well if seeded in early September. Radishes can be planted as late as October 1st. ☼

Leave Houseplant Pests out in the Cold This Fall

Sources: Richard Durham and John Hartman

When you bring houseplants indoors before temperatures get too cold, be sure to leave pest problems out in the cold.

A rule of thumb is to bring plants in before night temperatures drop below 50 degrees Fahrenheit to allow plants to adjust to warmer indoor temperatures. First, realize that many houseplants react poorly to an abrupt change in environment. Many will exhibit yellowing or dropping of leaves when moved to lower light conditions. While the

(Know Your Pests and Recognize Their Enemies...Continued from Page 3)

plants will usually adjust to indoor conditions, they may be unattractive for a few months. To lessen this response, begin to lower the light intensity your plants are receiving outdoors by gradually moving them to a more shady location about one month before you will move them indoors. The plant's gradual change and transition from one environment to another is called acclimation.

It's a good idea to inspect plants for pest problems several weeks before you plan to bring them inside. This precaution gives you ample time to take care of any insect or disease problems.

To combat foliar diseases, indicated by yellow, black or brown spots on leaves, remove and destroy the affected leaves; leave ample space between plants; avoid wetting foliage; and move plants to a less humid area.

Root and stem rot diseases usually occur under extremely wet soil conditions; so provide good drainage and avoid over-watering plants. Even under the best of indoor conditions, plants will likely need less water and fertilizer than they received outdoors so reduce these accordingly.

You usually can control small infestations of common insects, limited to a few plants, without using insecticides. For example, spray plants with water to wash off mites, or use a swab dipped in rubbing alcohol to remove light infestations of aphids, mealybugs and scale. To eliminate heavy infestations, use a soft brush or cloth dampened with soapy water solution of two tablespoons of mild soap per gallon of water.

If you decide to use a conventional insecticide on heavy infestations, always follow the manufacturer's label instructions.

Insects can cause serious problems on plants inside during the winter, because the natural predators that help control these pests outside are not in your home. So, separate the plants you've just brought in from others for several weeks to ensure the newcomers don't have insects that might travel to the other plants. Regularly inspect all plants to control inconspicuous pests you might not notice until a serious problem develops. For more information on houseplant insect control; visit http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/insects/find/houseplant-insect-control/

Once you bring plants inside, provide a favorable growing environment including light, humidity and fertility. And remember, most plants don't like to be in a draft. Optimum conditions reduce the chance of disease problems. Some symptoms are leaf edge and tip death, leaf drop, yellow leaves and spindly growth.

Spider mites can become a major problem indoors. They thrive off of warm and dry environments that are often present in winter homes. Look for yellow speckling on the leaves and webbing between leaves. Setting plants in the tub or shower and spraying the foliage will knock many of the spider mites loose, then follow with two sprays of an insecticidal soap or horticultural oil 7-10 days apart.

Spring Flowering Bulbs

Spring flowering bulbs are an important part of Kentucky's landscape. Crocus and daffodils tell us that spring is on its way, and red tulips are a Derby Day tradition.

Bulbs need to be planted in a well-drained site. The soil pH should be 6.0 to 7.0. Spring bulbs will not do well in heavy clay soils, so poor soils should be amended with compost, peat moss or other organic matter. Most bulbs prefer a site that does not receive full sunlight in the middle of the day. The normal planting time for spring flowering bulbs is October 15 through Thanksgiving.

These bulbs are planted in fall because it corresponds to the end of their natural dormancy. Most of these plants begin root growth in fall, followed by a cool stratification period necessary for proper flower development and then shoot growth in late winter and early spring.

No matter which bulbs you select, remember that the largest bulbs will produce the greatest show next spring. However, smaller bulbs will still produce some flowers, and these may be the best choice for mass planting or naturalizing. Avoid any bulbs that feel lightweight as these may have severely dried during storage.

As soon as the plants emerge in the spring, fertilize the area with 10-10-10 (N-P-K) fertilizer at a rate of 1 to 2 pounds per 100 square feet. A light application of bone meal fertilizer at planting is often recommended, though probably not necessary. Most bulbs do not need fertilization until growth emerges in the spring .After the flower petals fade or fall off, remove the flower organs with scissors or knife. Allow the remaining foliage to die naturally as bulbs will not mature properly when the foliage is removed prematurely.

Some homeowners use rubber bands or a similar to tie-up the foliage after it finishes flowering. This can harm the plant and cause it to not recapture the energy from the spent leaves well. Splitting or harvesting bulbs is generally not advised, yet many home gardeners have been successful with this procedure. If they need to be moved, dig them after the foliage has yellowed and died and store in a relatively dry, ventilated location until fall planting.

When selecting flower bulbs for your garden, consider flowering time, flower color and plant height. Bulbs can be purchased from mail order companies, garden centers, supermarkets or department stores. Some varieties are familiar and others have long, hard-to-pronounce names. They can be used as annuals or perennials in beds, in ground covers, in rock gardens or under trees and shrubs.

Here are a few recommended flower bulbs for Kentucky gardens.

- Dwarf Iris
- Crocus
- Glory-of-the-Snow
- Wind Flower
- Daffodil
- Hyacinth
- Siberian Squill
- Botanical Tulip
- Spring Starflower
- Trout Lily
- Crown Imperial Grape Hyacinth
- Star of Bethlehem
- Spanish Blue Bells
- Quamash
- Ornamental Onion
- Triplet Lily
- Tulips

For additional information about bulbs, as well as other types of plants, visit the University of Kentucky, Department of Horticulture's website at: http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Horticulture/homehort2.html

Adapted from the Cooperative Extension Service publication HortFacts 52-04 ☼

Make a Scarecrow

KIDZ CORNER

Supplies:

- 6 ft. long 2x4 wood
- 2 ft. long 2x4 wood
- newspapers
- twine
- nails
- hammer
- white pillow case
- old shirt
- old pants or overalls
- old hat
- old gloves
- scarf

Directions:

1. To make the scarecrow frame, nail the 2 ft. long 2x4 to the 6 ft. long 2x4 to form a cross. Dig a one foot deep hole and place wood frame in the hole and pack the soil firmly around the frame.

2. Draw a face on one side of the white pillow case, near the center. Stuff pillow case with newspaper. Place pillow case head on top of frame and tie shut with twine.

3. Tie pant legs closed with twine. Stuff pants full with newspaper. Nail pants to frame.

4. Put shirt on frame, button shirt half way closed. Tie sleeve cuffs and waist closed with twine. Stuff shirt with newspaper. Button shirt closed.

5. Put gloves, scarf and hat on scarecrow.

http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/youth/scarcrow.shtml

Extending the Gardening Season

Many vegetable gardens end with the first big frost. However, it doesn't have to be that way. Have you ever thought of ways that you might extend the garden season? Row covers, hot beds, hoop houses, and cold frames can all be used to extend the garden season. These types of structures can be built, or purchased to extend the season for several weeks for some of the more traditional garden crops such as tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers. The concept is simple. These structures trap heat during the day, and protect the frost sensitive crops during the cold nights. Many cool season crops can also be grown and harvested later in the fall. For instance cabbage, broccoli, turnips, and mustard greens can be planted and harvested late in the fall. Maybe you can extend your garden season this year!

"Mums" the Word

Fall would not be complete without the many different colors of chrysanthemums that are available. They come in many different colors including pink, white, yellow, lavender, maroon, and bronze. Mums go great with other fall decorations such as brightly multi-colored gourds, and pumpkins. We only get to enjoy them for about 4 to 6 weeks out of the year, but do you know what it takes to get them to your house?

Most mums begin as cuttings. These cuttings are typically shipped to greenhouse producers in late May or early June. Most are then potted, and pinched within two weeks. Pinching is the process where growing points are removed with a slight amount of stem and leaves. This process slightly increases the overall size of the plant, and "fills" the plant making it more desirable. Most mums are pinched again at least once (sometime two more times) throughout the summer. From when they are planted, until the time they are sold, growers water each mum pot once or twice daily. They are also fertilized at least once per week. Some producers actually adjust their fertilizer application to enable them to be fertilized daily or with each watering. Mums grow very slow through the summer months, but then grow rapidly in August and September. Mums are also photoperiod sensitive and will only flower in the shorter days of late summer or early fall. The next time you purchase mums, think about what it took to get them ready for you.

Tips for Picking out Quality Mums

When picking out mums, you are probably often tempted to pick the one with the most flowers. Although these are very beautiful at the garden store, you will not get as much enjoyment out of them. It is better to pick out mums with fewer blooms and more bloom pods. These will last much longer. The only exception is if you want them for a specific time or event. However, know that many of the blooms will soon "die back". Dead blooms should be removed by slightly shaking the pots, or you may have to physically remove each dead bloom that stays on the plant. Also, make sure to continue watering your mums on a regular basis. If the mums are not watered properly, and become too dry, the appearance of the blooms will not be as attractive.

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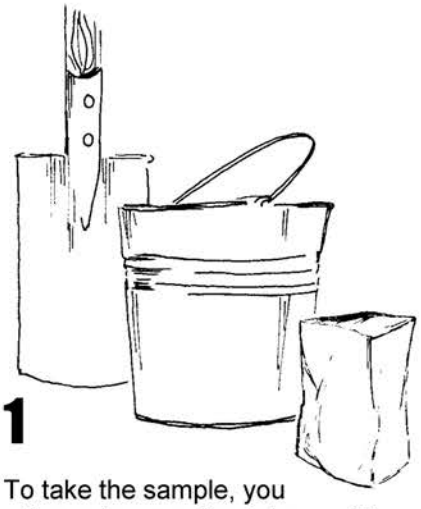
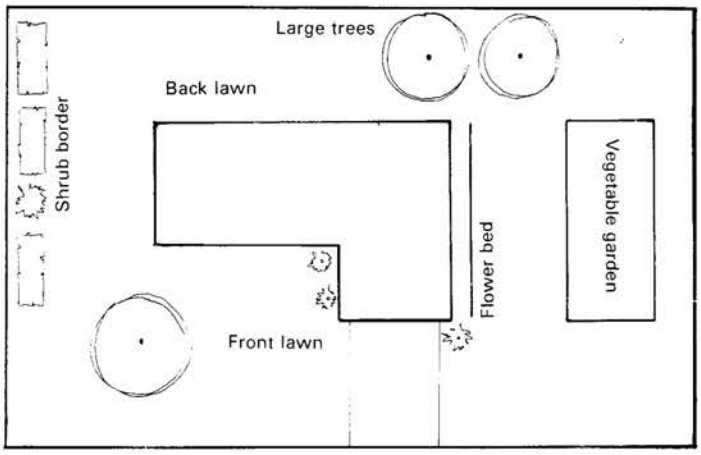
How to take good soil test samples



1

To take the sample, you will need a sampling tube or spade and a clean pail.



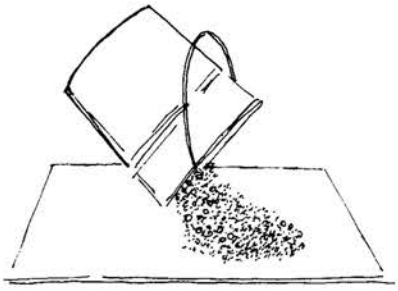
2

Sample the areas of the yard separately. So if you are doing the lawn, sample back and front separately. Obtain 10-15 samples from random locations for each sample test.

3 Sample to proper depth. If a spade is used, dig a V-shaped hole to the depth of sample. Obtain a slice or core of soil from the surface of the ground, downward to the appropriate depth as listed below. Use a spade to cut a thin slice of soil. First, push the spade into the soil and throw this soil aside. Take a one-inch thick slice of soil from the back of the hole at the proper depth.

DEPTH OF SAMPLE

Lawn	3 inches
Flower garden	4-6 inches
Shrub beds	6-8 inches
Vegetable garden	4-6 inches
Trees	4-8 inches
Pasture	4-6 inches
Corn, soybeans	to plow depth



4 Mix all soil thoroughly, breaking up the cores or slices. If soil is muddy, dry it before mixing.

Spread mixture out on clean paper to air dry. **Do not heat**. (Do not place in oven or on stove.) Do not dry in places where fertilizer or manure may get in sample.

Take one pint (2 cups) of soil to your County Extension Office for testing. There is a nominal charge to cover the cost of testing.

You will be required to fill out a form for processing your soil sample. Be sure to put the type of plant you will be growing, so the Extension Agent can recommend the proper soil treatment (i.e., lawn, vegetable garden, roses, needled evergreen, etc.)

Christmas Cactus- Blooming Tips

Rick Durham, Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist, University of Kentucky

Are you getting in the Christmas spirit? Your Christmas Cactus needs to be! Starting in September is when you need to start the process for your Cactus to be able to bloom around the holidays.

Christmas cactus (and Thanksgiving cactus) sometimes seem temperamental when it comes to blooming on schedule. It is not uncommon to see these plants in flower anytime from late October through February or March. However, if given the right stimulation, these plants can usually be induced to flower around Thanksgiving or Christmas. The key is providing the right types of stimuli to encourage flowering. First, keeping the plants on the dry side in September will help with initiation of flower buds. Don't let the plants dry out completely, just reduce the normal watering by about half. The naturally shorter days of autumn and cooler nights will also help to initiate flower buds. Move plants outdoors where they can experience a natural day/night cycle (away from unnatural light sources such as outdoor lighting or bright windows) until late October. Cover plants or move them to a garage or protected patio if there is a chance of frost. If you can't move them outdoor, consider placing them in a closet or similar area where the plants can get about 14 hours of uninterrupted darkness each night. In late October, bring the plants back to their former location in the house and resume normal watering. Flowering should begin in 3-6 weeks.

NAME _____

Form A or H

Sample #1_____

Sample #2 _____

Sample #3 _____

Sample #4 _____

Sample #5 _____

Staff _____

Contact the Franklin County Extension Office at (502) 695-9035 if you would like to receive our newsletter via email or email requests to gil.thurman@uky.edu or adam.leonberger@uky.edu.

If you DO NOT want to receive this newsletter or your address is incorrect, please notify us immediately.

Adam Leonberger
County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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