

A Guide to a Beautiful Lawn



SOD DEPOT OF TAMPA BAY CORPORATION

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Three Generations Committed to quality and Service



**DIRECT FROM OUR
FARM...**

**TO YOUR
YARD.**



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Your New Lawn

Your new lawn has been planted with the best available grass grown! But it will need your help to become the best lawn in the neighborhood. Here is what your new lawn will need.

WATER

Until roots extend down into the soil, grass needs water! It is best to water twice a day, early morning and mid-afternoon. Water deeply, this will take from one half hour to forty-five minutes, depending on your sprinklers. Do this for two to three weeks. Then, once a day for a week or two depending on weather. After the fourth week, two or three times a week for one half hour to forty-five minutes is sufficient. (Check with the local authorities for water restriction guidelines in your area) **DO NOT SET YOUR SPRINKLERS AND FORGET IT!** Adjust them from time to time as the weather changes! Too much water is as harmful as not enough.



1- A leaf blade of St. Augustine grass folded due to lack of water.

FERTILIZER

A light application of a **GOOD QUALITY** fertilizer is essential to the proper growth of the new lawn. The need for water during the initial establishing period tends to dilute and wash out fertilizer, so it needs to be applied lightly and frequently during establishment and periods of frequent watering. It is important to establish a fertility level and then maintain that level. This will allow the grass to continue to develop roots, runners (above or underground, depending on type of grass), and grass blades.



2 - Lawn on left fertilized, on right not fertilized.

As the grass grows it will shade out and resist invasion by weeds! A strong lawn is the best weed prevention program there is.



3 - Striping effect resulting from poor fertilizer coverage.

Weeds are often a sign of a hungry lawn! After the lawn is well established, deeply rooted, a healthy green, in vigorous growth, then you fertilize enough to maintain vigor but not encourage too much growth. A good rule of thumb is to fertilize in MARCH, JULY and OCTOBER.

Different fertilizer analysis are available from your local distributors. A 16-4-8 containing minor elements is a good choice.

WEEDS

There will be very few weeds in your new lawn. However in time, as you water, weed seeds will sprout in bare spots. This is one reason why fertilizer coverage is so important. Should you have weeds in just a few spots, they can be prevented from developing seed and spreading by regular mowing. If the weeds found are of the creeping variety, use weed killer in a small hand sprayer and spray directly. Remember, use chemical weed killers as a last resort.



4 - Pennywort or Dollarweed.

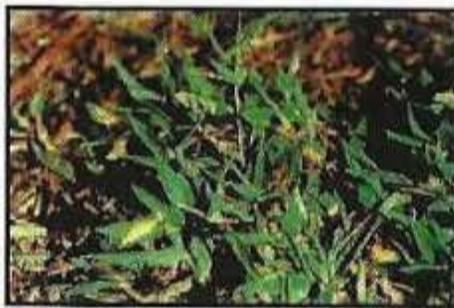


5 - Purple Nutsedge.

reason why fertilizer coverage is so important. Should you have weeds in just a few spots, they can be prevented from developing seed and



6 - Crowfoot grass.



7 - Crabgrass.

A good sharp mower used on a well-fed lawn keeps most weeds under control. If a lawn has been neglected and is overrun with weeds,



8 - Nutsedge.



9 - Creeping Charlie.

the proper steps are even more important. First fertilize, then when the grass is in relatively good health and able to withstand the effects of the weed killer, then apply it.

Another alternative is to use a weed-and-feed-combination type product. This combines a weed killer with a fertilizer applied at the same time. It is recommended that you follow the weed and feed application with a regular fertilizer application in two to three weeks. This will aid the lawn in growing out over the bare spots formerly occupied by the weeds.



10 - Globesedge.



11 - Amaranthus.

MOWING

Two types of mowers are used. Most common and most abused is the *rotary mower*. This type will handle very tall grass with relative ease, but if not kept sharp, it will tear the tips off. It does not cut the grass; it rips and tears. (Fig. 12) Fungus that generally is not much of a problem is introduced into the wounds made by the dull tearing blades and spread quickly.



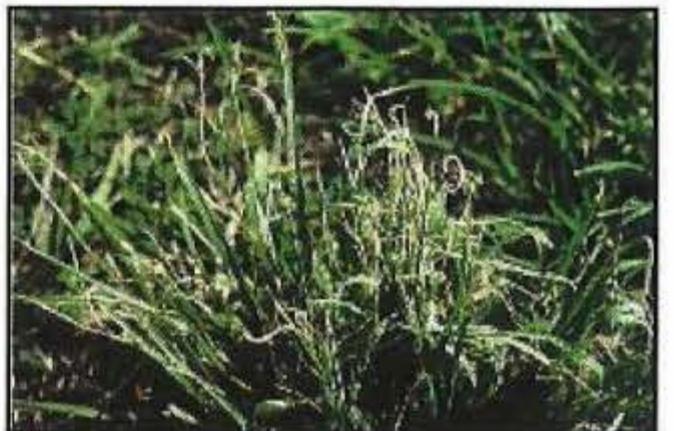
12 - St. Augustine grass blades after mowing with a dull blade

Sharpening the blades once a season is not enough. Grass, wet grass especially, is very abrasive and quickly wears down the spinning blade. Literally, the blade should be sharpened before every usage. This sounds like a big job, but all that needs sharpening is the very tips. All that actually cuts is the very end of the rotating blade. When sharpening, disconnect the spark plug wire to be safe. Use a file to sharpen the blade tip. It is amazing how much difference a sharp blade makes!



13 - St. Augustine grass blades after mowing with a sharp blade

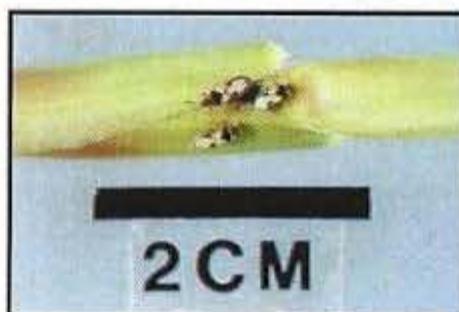
The other mower is the *reel mower*. This has several blades, which turn against a stationary "knife" shearing or cutting off the blades very cleanly. With a reel mower there is seldom any fungus! If used on a regular basis, the lawn looks better, healthier, and the grass clippings are smaller and decompose faster. Be sure to always remove the clippings after mowing. If allowed to get too tall, the grass should be mowed several times, bringing it down a bit at a time to prevent shock and sunburn of stems.



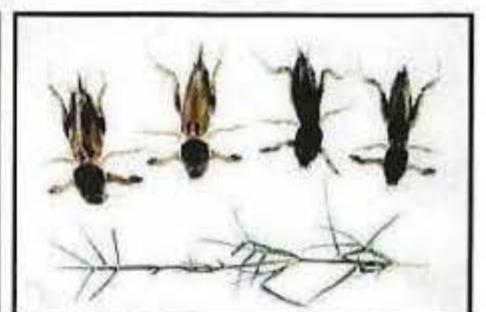
14 - Bahia grass blades after mowing with a dull blade

INSECTS

Chinch bugs are specific on St. Augustine and occasionally found on Bahia (Fig. 15). There are several treatments available, dry or liquid, and in combination with fertilizer (combination because grass is under stress and needs food to overcome the stress). Watch for slight difference in



15 - Adult chinch bug in St. Augustine grass.



16 - Mole crickets.



17- Mole cricket tunnel.



18 - Chinch bug damage in St. Augustine grass.



19- Adult sod webworm.



20- Army worm feeding.



21 - Damage St. Augustine grass from sod webworm feeding.



22 - White grubs under sod.

is a number of "millers" or flying moths; these lay the eggs. When you see these, start to watch for the worms, they are easily controlled with one application of insecticide. Check with your local county agent or Garden Center for the proper insecticide.

color of grass, especially along curbs, walks and drives. Peel the grass blades down to expose tiny reddish bugs.

Mole crickets attack all grasses, but are worst against Bahia (Fig. 16). Lawn feels soft or spongy underfoot. In the evening, you often see adults flying to lights and bed tunnels are visible as they burrow through the soil cutting the roots (Fig. 17). Many controls are available. Liquid, dry and baits are necessary to bring cycle in control.

Army worms and sod webworms eat the top of the grass (Fig. 21). The lawn

seems to disappear overnight! Look for webs and chewed grass early in the morning. Another sign

FUNGUS

Fungus attacks all grasses to a differing degree. Sharp mowers are a good defense. Adequate fertilizer to maintain a strong grass is



23 - Brown patch fungus.



24 - Gray leaf spot.

another defense. An observant owner is the best defense, for when he sees something suspicious he seeks help and treatment. Better to be safe than sorry.



25 - Dollar spot disease.

During periods of high humidity, fungi and spores are more likely to sprout and grow. Watering after one or two in the morning to wash germinating spores off foliage is also a good defense. A healthy, well-fed lawn is more resistant to fungus, too. Avoid shocks such as drought, close mowing and cheap fertilizer which can burn!

SHADE

Grasses just do not grow well in shade (see right). It is only a matter of time before sod installed in shade starts to deteriorate. We have experienced that fertilizing more often with smaller dosages and mowing the sod at a higher setting are the best protection for shade areas. Spraying with fungicides is also recommended, since fungus is more likely to appear under this condition.



26 - Too much shade to grow most turf grasses.

MOWING HEIGHTS

Most grasses benefit from being mowed from two to three inches high. Any lower mowing exposes the stem to the sun and can cause possible sunburn. If the grass is excessive in height, then remove it in two or three stages to be on the safe side.



27 - Scalping of St. Augustine grass. Improper height.

Do not shock it by removing six inches at a time! This causes the roots to die back, since they are no longer needed. Then, if the stems become sunburned, additional shock occurs and thus more dieback. The soil then becomes exposed and weeds start to sprout and invade. As a result, weed killer is applied, thus adding another shock. Sometimes it is a wonder that any grass survives at all.

IN A NUTSHELL

WATER regularly, MOW with a sharp mower, FERTILIZE regularly, watch for insects and treat as needed. You can't kill them if they are not there. The same applies to fungus. Check your lawn on a weekly basis. Examine any suspicious areas and ask questions. WE ARE HERE TO HELP, AND WE ARE GLAD TO DO SO. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL US.

NOTE: Most insecticides do not kill the eggs, thus it is recommended a second application 10 to 14 days after initial application in order to kill newly hatched insects.

Do not water lawn for at least 24 hours after insecticide application.



***CONTINUOUS CARE
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GOAL OF PROVIDING
YOU WITH THE
BEST AVAILABLE SOD.***



Sod Depot of Tampa Bay

St. Augustine Sod – Summer Maintenance Guide

Keep your St. Augustine sod thriving during Tampa's hot summer months with this quick, effective care guide. Perfect for homeowners or field crew reference. For more tips, call Sod Depot of Tampa Bay or visit our website SODDEPOTOFTAMPABAY.COM!

1. Watering Schedule (Consistency is Key)

- Water 2 times per week, early morning (4–9 a.m.) IF ALLOWED BY YOUR MUNICIPALITY.
- Soak to about 6 inches deep – aim for ¾" to 1" of water per session.
- If blades fold or turn bluish-gray, increase watering slightly.

2. Mowing (Don't Scalp It!)

- Keep mowing height at 3.5–4 inches.
- Never remove more than ⅓ of the blade at a time.
- Ensure mower blades are sharp to prevent grass damage.

3. Fertilizing

- Apply a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer every 6–8 weeks.
- Use 16-4-8 or 15-0-15 blends depending on soil needs.
- Avoid over-fertilizing in extreme heat.

4. Pest & Disease Watch

- Look for chinch bugs if you see patchy brown spots that resist watering. PLEASE TREAT WITH AN INSECTICIDE.
- Consider preventative grub control if issues occurred in previous years.
- Only apply fungicide if disease is confirmed (e.g., brown patch or gray leaf spot).

5. Shade + Compaction

- Trim trees to allow at least 4 hours of sunlight in shady areas.
- Aerate compacted soil to help roots grow deeper and stronger.

Bonus Pro Tip:

- New sod? Water deeply every day for the first 30 days for 45 minutes TO 1 hour to establish roots, then follow the regular schedule.