

# THE TURF TIMES



## Welcome to our newsletter!

Our goal is to provide accurate, researched information to develop and maintain your ideal lawn.

Each issue contains an article written by Blue Grass staff, as well as information from university researchers and tips from area experts. **This issue contains information on your options for winterizing your lawn, recovering from drought, and whether or not we recommend overseeding.**

Feel free to contact us with questions or suggestions at any time. 319-842-2165 or [sarah@bgsod.com](mailto:sarah@bgsod.com)

Know someone who should subscribe? Have them do so here: <http://www.bgsod.com/new-index/#newsletters-1>

### In This Issue

- Step 4 Reminder
- Recovering from Drought
- Overseeding

### Next Issue

- Happy Holidays!



## Step 4 Reminder

*You have two options when it comes to a fall application.*

**If you have weeds:** Stop out for the regular Step 4 (one bag covers 11,000 square feet) any time this month. Step 4 is the “weird” step of our four step program in that it goes on when the grass is dewey in the morning and then you do NOT want rain for at least 24 hours.

**What if I only have a few weeds?:** Great question. You have a few options. Some weeds can be pulled, some will be killed by the first frost, and some weeds spread by rhizomes underground and would need to be killed with a spot spray. It is always a good idea to know what kind of weed you are trying to remove because that will guide your best practices.

**If you do not have weeds:** Just a simple feeding of 13-13-13 will thicken your lawn and help it store up the energy it needs to prepare for winter.

## Recovering from Drought

*Help! July was REALLY hot and dry and my lawn suffered. What should I do to help it come back?*

First off, you are not alone. We have been fielding lots of “Lawn SOS” phone calls for the better part of a month due to the extreme heat and humidity in July.



Many lawns sustained damage that looks like the image on the right. This is called sun scorch. All plants can essentially burn up in the sun if deprived of water and subjected to extreme heat. Let’s talk recovery: if you have damage like this in your lawn, you will want to stop out for an extra application of 13-13-13 to help your lawn fill in this area. We would not recommend overseeding damage like what is shown above (the next page will explain why).

*How do I prevent this from happening in the future?* We need to talk about cultural practices to help avoid this time of damage in the future. Here are some pro tips:

1. Don’t mow your lawn when it is stressed from heat. It is better to let your lawn get long than to dehydrate it further by cutting the blade.
2. Don’t fertilize your lawn in extreme heat. Do a soil test so that we can determine if calcium-based soil conditioners like lime or gypsum may help alleviate some of your compaction issues.
3. Core aerate your lawn at least once a year. Soil compaction leads to shallow root systems that cannot access moisture from lower soil profiles. The photo below is from the UK this last summer and is a great example of how soil compaction can impact lawns, even decades later. As you can see, a previous owner of this lawn had an intricate garden design.
4. Use your irrigation wisely. Do NOT water your lawn every day during the year. By doing this, you are encouraging the plants to rely on surface water, rather than putting down long roots to survive extreme conditions. It is better to water your lawn less often, but very deeply, than to water a little bit each day.



## Why We Avoid Overseeding

*It makes more problems than it solves.*

It may come as a surprise, but overseeding is not usually the best answer for a thinning lawn. The correct first step is to identify the reason WHY a lawn is thinning and address that issue directly. Iowa is a part of the grasslands of our nation, if grass isn't thriving here, it is due to one of three reasons: 1. lack of sun 2. soil compaction issues or 3. incorrect feeding strategies.

Spend time thinking about these three issues and then call us with a summary of what is going on. We will help you sort out which of these three issues may be the culprit for your thinning lawn and help you brainstorm what you can do about fixing the issues for a long term solution.

## The Main Danger: Mismatched Seed

*Earlier this year, I received this photo with the question: Will my lawn ever match?*

This customer had work done in his lawn and the company used our sod (dark green) to patch the area. As you can see, he had an existing lawn that didn't come from our farm. The short answer is: No. These grasses will never match even though they are all Kentucky bluegrass plants.

The reason why they will not match is the same reason why planting silver maples next to crimson maples, or Norwegian maples, will not cause the trees to magically match each other. They are different cultivars of plants within the *species* of "maple". Grasses behave the same way. The Kentucky bluegrass species has over 350 cultivars that all grow at different heights, textures, colors, green-up-speeds, etc. I have included some photos below from a seed production facility where you can see test plots of cultivars planted next to each other so you can see these differences.

Long story short, introducing new, unknown seed into your existing lawn can result in interesting



*Do you know a group or a business who might be interested in a private tour of Blue Grass? Have them contact me at [sarah@bgsod.com](mailto:sarah@bgsod.com) or 319-842-2165 to set up their tour!*



## Interesting Article

This week, NPR reported on the cooling affects of green spaces in cities (focused primarily on trees). This report goes hand-in-hand with decades of research out of the turf world regarding grass lawns helping to reduce home heating and cooling bills (and therefore reducing the pull on the electrical grid).

Read more about how green spaces impact health here:

<https://www.npr.org/2019/09/04/755349748/trees-are-key-to-fighting-urban-heat-but-cities-keep-losing-them>

**Thank you new subscriber, Jason Evans, for this adorable picture of a happy Blue Grass customer! If you have a lawn photo you are proud of, feel free to share and we will include it in our next newsletter!**



## Review Us, Please!

We work hard to help our customers. Now we need your help to improve our online presence! The more reviews we have, the higher we appear in search results online. We are on Google, Facebook, Yelp and Houzz for your reviewing pleasure!

