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Lawn Maintenance Calendar



Spring (March – May)

Mowing - Mow the lawn when it turns green in the spring with a sharp mower set roughly at 1 inch prior to grass reaching over 2 inches. Letting clippings lay will help add nitrogen back to the soil so try to avoid collecting clippings as much as possible. Using a mulch type mower blade and mulching mower attachments will help keep clippings from clumping. Mulching clippings can reduce fertilizer needs by as much as 25%. If a scheduled mowing is missed and clippings clump on top of the Empire, bag or vacuum clippings to reduce shade-out and excessive thatching.

Fertilization - Apply 1 pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet (consult Fertilizer Calculator) several weeks after the grass turns green. Submit a soil sample to determine nutrient and lime requirements. In the absence of a soil test, use a complete nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) turf-grade fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio (for example, 12-4-8 or 16-4-8). (Contact your county Cooperative Extension Service for details.) Apply lime if suggested.

Irrigation - Bermudagrass needs a weekly application of about 1 to 1¼ inches of water. Apply water to a soil depth of 4 to 6 inches. You can use a screwdriver as a probe to determine moisture depth. Sandy soils often require more frequent irrigation, for example, ½ inch of water every third day. It is sometimes necessary to irrigate an area for 2 to 3 hours to apply 1 inch of water. Heavier clay soils accept water more slowly so irrigate just until runoff occurs, wait ½ hour until the water has been absorbed, and then continue irrigating until the desired depth or amount is obtained. This may require running two programs with your irrigation controller. Proper irrigation is crucial to lawn health, too much can be just as detrimental as too little. If your lawn seems too dry or too wet – it probably is!





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Weed Control - Apply a preemergent herbicide to control grassy weeds by the time the dogwoods are in full bloom. Apply postemergent herbicides in May as needed to control broadleaf weeds. Products containing two or three broadleaf herbicides usually control several different broadleaf weeds in a lawn more effectively. Be sure the product is labeled for use on bermudagrass. Apply postemergent herbicides only when weeds are present, and wait until three weeks after the lawn becomes green. **For any herbicide applications always read and follow label directions carefully.**

Insect Control - Check for white grubs and control them if necessary. **For any insecticide application read and follow label directions carefully.**

Thatch Removal - Vertically mow in May to remove the thatch (layer of dead and decaying grass) after the lawn becomes green if the thatch is more than ½ inch thick. Too much thatch is a breeding ground for disease and insects while not enough thatch can allow grass to dry out quickly so try to manage this layer to your advantage.

Summer (June – August)

Mowing - Maintain Tifway 419 lawns with a sharp mower blade at a height between 1 – 1½". Mowing heights above 2" will reduce turfgrass density and increase weed problems. Never remove more than one third of the leaf blade at a time. Letting clippings lay will help add nitrogen back to the soil so try to avoid collecting clippings as much as possible. Using a mulch type mower blade and mulching mower attachments will help keep clippings from clumping. Mulching clippings can reduce fertilizer needs by as much as 25%. If a scheduled mowing is missed and clippings clump on top of the Empire, bag or vacuum clippings to reduce shade-out and excessive thatching.

Fertilization - Apply 1 pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet every 4 to 6 weeks using the March through May fertilizing guidelines. (consult Fertilizer Calculator)

Irrigation - Follow the March through May irrigation guidelines.





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Insect Control - Check for white grubs and control them if necessary. August is the best time to control white grubs because they are small and close to the soil surface. **For any insecticide application read and follow label directions carefully.**

Weed Control - Apply postemergent herbicides as needed to control summer annual and perennial broadleaf. Grassy weeds can be controlled with postemergent grass control herbicides. Two or three applications 7 to 10 days apart are required for effective control. Apply herbicides only when weeds are present, the grass is actively growing, and the lawn is not suffering from drought stress. **For any herbicide applications always read and follow label directions carefully.**

Disease - If proper fertilization, irrigation and mowing protocol as explained in this document are followed, it is highly unlikely that disease will ever be a problem with your Tifway 419 lawn. If any disease were to attack Tifway 419 it would most likely be dollar spot which is easily identifiable and the cure is to fertilize the grass.

Thatch Control - Thatch is the layer of dead and decomposing leaf blades and stems on top of the soil surface. Thatch occurs naturally but can become excessive due to over fertilization and poor mowing practices. Vertical mowing is the proven remedy for thatchy lawns. Thatch accumulations greater than ½ inch should be removed as excessive thatch is a breeding ground for harmful insects and diseases. It is possible to harm the grass during this process so it is recommended to have a turf professional who has experience with the equipment perform this task. Vertical blades should be spaced 1-2 inches apart for best results on Tifway 419. Vertical mowing should only take place when the grass is actively growing to maximize recovery time. Vertical mowing should only be performed on healthy non stressed grass. Thatch can be removed monthly if the lawn has sufficient time to recover.

Aeration - In particularly compacted or heavy clay soil or when thatch levels are thick, aeration is recommended to allow oxygen and water to more easily penetrate to the roots where they are needed. The best time to aerate is when the grass is actively growing in the summer months.





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Fall (September – November)

Mowing - Mow the lawn following the March through May guidelines until several weeks before the first expected frost. Raise the mowing height ½ inch as winter approaches if the lawn will not be overseeded. Mowing height is usually raised in mid-to-late September in the Carolinas. Mowing height of lawns in the western and northwestern areas of the Carolinas may be raised one to two weeks earlier, whereas mowing height in the south central and coastal regions may be raised one to two weeks later.

Fertilization - Apply no more than ½ pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet in September, four to six weeks before the first expected frost. Use a low-nitrogen, high-potassium fertilizer such as a 5-10-30, or supplement a nitrogen fertilizer source with 1 pound of potash(K₂O) using 1.6 pounds of muriate of potash (0-0-60), 2 pounds of potassium sulfate (0-0-50), or 5 pounds of sul-po-mag (0-0-22) per thousand square feet. (consult Fertilizer Calculator)

Irrigation - Follow the March through May irrigation guidelines. Dormant bermudagrass (particularly newly sodded lawns) need to be watered periodically when warm, windy weather prevails.

Weed Control - Apply preemergent or postemergent herbicides as needed to control winter annual and perennial broadleaf weeds. Preemergent herbicides do not control existing perennial weeds. Apply postemergent herbicides only when weeds are present. Do not apply herbicides designed to control annual bluegrass if the lawn is to be overseeded with ryegrass. We strongly recommend not overseeding and encourage the use of preemergent herbicides. **For any herbicide applications always read and follow label directions carefully.**

Insect Control - Follow the March through May insect control guidelines.



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Winter (December – February)

Mowing - Dormant bermudagrass that has not been overseeded need not be mowed. Keep lawn free of leaves and debris throughout the winter months.

Fertilization - Do not fertilize bermudagrass that has not been overseeded.

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 and newly sodded areas.

Weed Control - Apply broadleaf herbicides as needed to control weed 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. **For any herbicide applications always read and follow label directions carefully.**





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About Bermudagrass

Bermudagrasses range from coarse to fine in texture, and they grow low and dense. They are very drought tolerant, require full sunlight, and grow well on all but poorly drained soils. Bermudagrasses withstand wear and traffic, establish quickly, and recover rapidly from injury. They can invade flower beds and other areas where they are not wanted because they have a strong above- and below- ground stem system. (For this reason we rarely recommend them for lawn grasses) Herbicides such as Vantage, Fusilade, or Roundup are effective, although straight edging with these materials is difficult. Bermudagrass performs best when mowed at $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch with a reel mower; however, good performance can be achieved using a rotary mower with sharp blades set as low as possible without scalping. Uneven terrain may prohibit bermudagrass from being mowed as short as desired.

Because of their aggressive nature, bermudagrasses have very few serious pest problems, but are subject to sting-nematode damage when grown in sandy soils. Nematode damage leads to shallow-rooted plants that do not respond to water and fertilizer, resulting in thin, weak areas invaded by weeds. If nematodes are suspected, submit a soil sample to your local county Cooperative Extension Service for analysis.

