



# TURF TIDBITS



Your Turf Management Professionals

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**ANNUAL BLUEGRASS IN LAWNS:** This is considered a weed because the seed heads look unsightly next to our nicely manicured perennial (regular) bluegrass lawns. You don't notice it the entire time it's in your lawn except for the 2-3 weeks that it's seeding out, which is right now. The seed heads form right at the mow line in late spring. It's an annual, so it only lives for 1 year. Although the plants will die soon with the heat of the summer, any seeds that come in contact with the soil will sprout new grass this fall. Those sprouts will survive the winter and sprout the seed heads next spring and so on. Because it's not that aggressive or unsightly for a long period of time, expensive treatments aren't required. You can mow more frequently during the seeding stage to disguise it. Then bag the clippings to catch as many of the seeds as possible.



April and May were above normal for rain fall. Some people are still trying to dry out their basements & lawns! July & August are usually back to dry. When Mother Nature decides to turn off the spicket, we'll need to start supplementing our watering.

**Grass in our area needs 1" per week to stay green and healthy.**

We recommend **watering ½ inch of water twice per week in the early morning hours.** Watering at night makes the lawn more susceptible to fungus because the turf can't dry off before nightfall and cool, moist, dark conditions are perfect breeding grounds for fungus spores.

If you're investing in the water, you might as well have it be put to the best use possible. You may even find out that you could be saving money or conserving water.

**Do you know how much water is being applied during a cycle? Are all the heads working properly? Do you have a rain-out switch?** Just remember that deeper, infrequent waterings are BEST: **TWO TIMES PER WEEK, ½ INCH EACH TIME.**

**Now that we've talked about the rain levels let's talk THE HEAT levels during the summer**



The grasses in our area are what are considered "cool season" grasses. Meaning, they perform their best during the coolest months of the year - SPRING and FALL. During times where the temperature &/or the heat indexes are above 75 degrees, our grasses start to stress out. If ample rainfall (article above) or supplemental watering doesn't occur, the lawn becomes more stressed, which makes it susceptible to weeds, insects, and fungus (article below). We visited many lawns last summer, where lawns were not only dry but also very heat stressed; where there were more weeds and brown spots. You'll also notice soon that you'll slow down on mowing, compared to in the spring and fall. It's all because of the **heat.**

Help your lawn by watering 2x per week, ½ inch of water each time, if natural rainfall does not occur.

# Summer Brown Spots Explained

*Difference between fungus, disease, grubs, and dormancy*

In times of stress, your turf may be more susceptible to fungus, insects, or weeds. Think of it as your body's immune system. When your immune system is under attack, you're more susceptible to pick up *other* issues. The same holds true for your turf. To keep things healthy we recommend watering in the early morning hours 2 times per week, ½ inch of water each time. You may need to get a rain gauge out there to measure how long that's going to take, but then you'll know for sure. A perfect example of this, is my next door neighbor and I had the same sod company install our sod at the same time 6 years ago. He wasn't watering last summer and I was. His lawn got inundated with dollar spot and it looked like his yard was fried, while my lawn was perfectly fine. He doesn't have Green 4 Ever either, so that's also going to be a factor. It's going to take a lot of rainfall and cooler temps before his lawn jumps out of it, but it will. Dollar spot usually doesn't kill the grass; it just makes it look unsightly until temperatures and rainfall moderate. **Avoid this and other problems by keeping the lawn healthy: gentle fertilizing & watering properly during the hot, stressful summer months**

## Fungus #1: Dollar Spot:



## Fungus #2: Summer Patch:



## Grubs:



**FUNGUS:** There are fungicides on the market claiming they can help you get rid of lawn fungus. But really, they help mask symptoms until the weather straightens out. It actually takes preventative measures such as aerating, watering in the morning hours rather than evening, raking, and fertilizing consistently to help prevent these funguses from returning.

Fungicides can also come with a price because they usually require multiple treatments. **Dollar Spot and Summer Patch, are very common in our area and especially during hot, humid weather.** Dollar spot usually perks up after fertilizing with some nitrogen & then watering. Summer patch usually appears when something else is going on; too thick of a thatch layer, a compacted, high foot-traffic area, or under drought stress.

**GRUBS:** Grubs occur naturally in the soil. If you look hard enough, you'll probably find grubs in your lawn, even if you don't see any damage. It's having 2-3 or more grubs in a square foot section that determines an infestation. **You can identify grubs by easily lifting up large sections of turf like a toupee or carpet and the white grub worms will be found.** Where grubs have been identified, we can apply an insecticide to kill them. Call us for a quote! Then you may have to over-seed or re-sod any areas that turned brown or bare.

**If you would like to prevent grubs,** call us and we can apply an insecticide that'll prevent the damaging effects of grubs and other turf inhabiting pests by killing them at their egg stage **BEFORE** the damage occurs.

**DORMANCY:** These pictures show the different stages of a lawn.

- **Stage 1:** You'll see that a well maintained yard will have nice, dark green color, and good thickness. Continue fertilizing and then watering 2x per week, ½ inch each time to maintain this look.
- **Stage 2:** This lawn is not being watered so as it is entering dormancy, it starts to lose its vigor and color. If you start to water 2x per week, ½ inch each time, it'll only take 7-14 days for it to perk back up.
- **Stage 3:** A completely dormant lawn is going to take quite a bit of water and a few weeks to get it back to Stage 1 condition.

Going dormant is the grass's natural defense against drought conditions & high temperatures. If you've decided to let the lawn go dormant during the summer, just remember that you might be opening the lawn up to fungus, insect, or weed problems. Whatever you decide for your watering plan (whether to let the

## Dormancy:



lawn go dormant or not), stick with that plan for best results. Don't go back & forth from bringing the grass in and out of dormancy, as that drains the grass's energy supplies. Supplies that would be better used to protect the grass during the harsh winter months.

## SUMMER TO-DO LIST

### LAWN:

- Start **watering** 2x per week, ½ inch each time to keep your lawn nice and green & healthy through the summer
- **Raise** your mower height to 3"
- Don't bag the clippings, **mulch them** through the summer months
- Sign up for a **fall aeration or sidewalk edging**. Call today for a quote.
- Be aware of "**Mower Blight**". A condition that causes cuts, scratches, and damage to tree trunks when you get too close and make contact with the mower or trimmer. This makes the tree susceptible to insects, fungus, and overall decline. Make a 3' diameter circle around the base of the tree and cover with wood mulch.

### GARDEN:

- Continue **dead-heading** flowering perennials and shrubs for continued blooms OR stop dead-heading if you want to collect seed pods from them.
- **Don't cut the leaves** of your spring flowering bulbs until all the growth has died. Tulip and daffodil foliage may already be all brown and that's ok to clean that up, but iris foliage will last much of the season and should only have their flower stalks cut back
- **Water annuals** and annual pots every day or every other day and fertilize them about every 10-14 days with a bloom-boosting fertilizer.
- Keep weeds, insects, and diseases out of the vegetable garden by **controlling pests** as soon as they are spotted.

### HOME:

- Weekly, **turn houseplants** ¼ turn for even growth.
- **Turn your compost pile** and sprinkle with water if it's drying out
- Keep **birdbaths and water features refreshed** to prevent mold and mosquitos and to supply our flying friends with water during the heat of the summer.

## CICADA KILLER WASPS



These larger than normal wasps aren't as dangerous as they appear. As the name implies Cicada killer wasps hunt cicadas, the loud, buzzing insects we hear in the summer. Males do not even have stingers, but the female wasps do. She really only uses her stinger to sting the cicada, paralyze it, and drag it down to her under-ground nest to feed the family. Even though the females have stingers, most do not sting humans unless handled. Males, to protect their home, will hover & fly really close to you if you're getting too close to their nest. Their size is usually enough to make people start running, though!

In most cases, control of the wasps is not necessary due to their non-aggressive nature. However, if a nest is in a high-traffic area, removal may be needed. Sprinkle an insecticide containing carbaryl or permethrin into the entrance hole. You will find the quarter-sized entrance holes in areas of the lawn that are thin. It's easy for the wasps to burrow when there's not a lot of vegetation to chew through. So, another form of control is to over-seed with grass to thicken things up.

### Sioux Falls water restrictions clarified:

The city currently has stage 1 water restrictions in place.

This means a couple of things:

- 1) between 12-5pm you cannot water
- 2) if the last digit of your house is odd, then you can water on odd days. Same goes for even numbered houses.

Because of this, many people set up their sprinkler systems to water every other day for 10-20 mins.

This usually causes more harm than good because that's not enough time for the water to really penetrate through to the roots where it's needed.

**Just because the city allows us to water every other day, doesn't mean that's what's best**

### SPECIAL OFFER!

Got a neighbor who has weeds?

Your referral is the greatest compliment. In appreciation for any new referral that signs up for our

**Lawn Care or Perimeter Pest Program,**

we will give you **\$10** off your Fall application!

