Don't become overwhelmed.
We have listed many tips for lawns in northern Utah. Not every lawn has all of these needs. Pick and choose those tips that are specific to your lawn's requirements.

Rockin E Gardening Handouts

Tips and Suggestions for 'Year-Round' Gardening

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Lawn Care Guidelines

A healthy lawn is not an accident, it requires regular fertilization, consistent watering, weekly mowing, and a constant diligence (watching for weeds, insects, or disease problems). You do not have to be an expert to have a healthy lawn; it is easier than you may think. As long a you keep in mind a few easy guidelines, your lawn will grow correctly and you can have a great looking, healthy lawn.

A healthy lawn will save you both time and money, because your lawn will be more resistant to diseases, it will crowd out more unwanted weeds, it will overcome insect problems faster, and it will withstand drought conditions better, than a struggling lawn can. It will also make gardening more fun and relaxing.

We suggest that you fertilize your lawn four times each year.

1. Spring ---- April to May
2. Summer -- May to June
Skip July to early-August
3. Fall -------- Late-August to September
4. Winter ---- October to November

Spring Lawn Care

Spring is the time to start planning your lawn care program. Don't fertilize too early in the spring. Wait until the soil begins to warm, in March, before applying your first application of fertilizer.

¤ Apply **Crabgrass Preventer** when the Forsythia plants are just about finished blooming, approximately April 15 to 30.

¤ Fertilize your lawn every 6 to 8 weeks during the spring, summer, and fall with **25-3-10 Lawn Fertilizer, Dr. Earth Lawn Food,** or one of the other recommended types of fertilizers.

¤ Apply broadleaf weed killers to kill dandelions and other weeds when the weeds are actively growing. Approximately May 1 to November 1.

¤ Water lawns with approximately 1" of water per week. Apply 1/2" of water each time you water. See the section on Watering Tips to know exactly how much 1/2" of water is.

¤ Mow your lawn 1.5" long during the spring.

¤ Apply **humic acid** to promote healthy roots and to prevent thatch buildup. You can apply humic acid once or twice a year to help your lawn.

¤ Aerate your lawn to promote better water penetration and to stimulate root growth.

Summer Lawn Care

Fertilize your lawn every six to eight weeks during the spring, summer, and fall. Try not to fertilize during July. Your lawn should grow slower during the heat of summer. Excessive fertilizer stimulates extra growth, which is not good for the grass when it is really hot. Too much fertilizer also makes the lawn require extra water to keep it growing properly.

However, if you must fertilize your lawn during the hot weather, use a slow releasing fertilizer such as **Milorganite** or **Dr. Earth Lawn Fertilizer.** Iron and humate are also products that you can apply during the hot summer weather.

Normally, it is better to under-fertilize a lawn during the hot weather than to over-fertilize it, especially if you are trying to conserve the amount of water you need to use.

¤ Apply broadleaf weed killers until the temperature gets above 85°F. The temperature should stay below 95°F degrees for 24 hours after you spray, for the best results and to be safe. Do not spray on a windy day.

¤ Kill Spurge and Oxalis plants as soon as you see them start to grow. Don't wait too long because they start producing new seeds even when the plants are still young.

¤ Fertilize your lawn with **21-7-7 Lawn Fertilizer** or **Dr. Earth Lawn Food** sometime between mid-May to late-June, or wait until late-August.

¤ Do not fertilize your lawn during July or early-August unless you absolutely have to.

¤ Let your lawn slow down during the heat of summer by reducing the amount of fertilizer you apply.

¤ Water your lawn with about 2" of water per week. Apply 1/2" of water each time you water. See the section on Watering Tips to know how much 1/2" of water is.

¤ Apply Crabgrass and Spurge Preventer approximately May 15 - 30 to prevent spurge and many other lawn weeds. If you use Crabgrass and Spurge control without fertilizer, you can just apply it in the parkstrips and around the edges of the lawn, instead of having to spread it over the entire lawn.

¤ Spray a Liquid Crabgrass Killer in July or August to control young crabgrass plants that may have started to grow, especially around the edges of your lawn. This spray may also kill watergrass, goosegrass, barnyard grass and many other annual, grassy weeds.

¤ Apply grub control in May and/or September to control Sod Webworms. Ask us which product is best.

¤ Apply grub control in July and/or August to control lawn Billbugs. Ask us which product is best.

¤ Apply grub control in May or July through September to control chinchbugs. Ask us which product is best.

¤ Mow lawns 2.5" to 3" tall. The longer you let the grass grow the better it will respond to the summer heat.

¤ Apply a lawn fungicide to prevent necrotic ringspot, brown patch, fusarium, or melting out. Ask us when and which product is best.

¤ Apply humic acid to promote healthy roots, to help increase drought tolerance, to help prevent and control some lawn diseases, and to help eliminate thatch buildup.

¤ Kill Bermuda Grass and Quack Grass during the heat of the summer. These grasses do not die unless the temperature is hot. It takes 2 to 3 months for complete control. Apply Kleenup or Killzall every two or three weeks until you are sure that all the roots and rhizomes are dead. Continue to water the treated area to stimulate new shoots to appear. Do not try to replant your lawn until you are sure that all the grass is completely dead.

Spray Tip: No broadleaf weed killers should be applied when the temperature will get above 95º F. within the next 24 hours. Do not spray on Windy Days.

When the temperature is above 85º F. many broadleaf weed killers volatilize (evaporate) and may drift onto other nearby plants. The chemicals may actually volatilize before the targeted weed can absorb them. If so, the intended plant may not die, but nearby plants might be adversely affected.

Other types of weed killers are not as volatile, so they are safer to use during the hot weather, as long as you are careful. Kleenup, Roundup, Killzall, Over-The-Top, Poast, and Liquid Crabgrass Killer are all labeled to use during the hot summer weather.

Fall Lawn Care

Mow your lawn 1.5" to 2" long until the last time you mow your lawn for the year; then cut it as short as your lawn mower will go.

Many lawn weeds are still growing in the fall. **Bonide Weadbeater** is a good spray to kill most broadleaf weeds in the lawn including dandelions, morning glory, and clover. **Bonide Weadbeater** will not kill any of the 'grassy weeds', just the 'broadleaf weeds'.

It is very hard to control the grassy weeds (crabgrass, foxtail grass, barnyard grass, water grass) in the fall. If you have any of these types of grassy weeds spray them with a **Liquid Crabgrass Killer** in July and August. In September and October, just pull as many as possible, and be sure to apply **Crabgrass & Spurge Preventer** in the spring to prevent these types of weeds next year.

¤ Fertilize your lawn with **21-7-7 Lawn Fertilizer, Dr. Earth Lawn Food,** or **Weed and Feed** approximately Labor Day weekend.

¤ Mow your lawn 1.5" - 2" long. It should be a little shorter than the 2.5" - 3" height that you mowed during the summer.

¤ Control broadleaf weeds, especially clover and morning glory. Fall is an excellent time to kill many lawn weeds.

¤ Kill Oxalis before the temperature drops below 50º F. Use **Fertilome Weed Free Zone** for the best control of Oxalis.

¤ Water lawns 1" per week. Apply 1/2" of water each time you water. See the section on Watering Tips to know how much 1/2" of water is.

¤ Make sure any Bermuda Grass or Quack Grass, you are trying to control, is completely dead before replanting your lawn.

¤ Apply humic acid to promote healthy roots.

¤ Apply grub control until mid-October. Many lawn insects stop damaging the lawn when the soil temperature cools down, so insecticides are not very effective later in the fall.

¤ Continue to watch for signs of lawn diseases such as Rust and Necrotic Ring Spot.

¤ Remove mature crabgrass plants before they can produce seeds. The more seeds you remove this year, the fewer weeds you will have to deal with next year.

¤ Power rake and over-seed your lawn in the fall rather than waiting until next spring. Fall is the best time to overseed your lawn.

¤ Fall is the best time to plant a new lawn from seed or sod.

Winter Lawn Care

Mow your lawn short the last time you mow for the year. By cutting the grass a little shorter in the late-fall, you reduce the chance of it laying down and creating a snowmold problem during the winter. Do not cut your lawn short until the last time you mow it for the year.

"Don't Leave The Leaves." Make sure that you rake all the leaves from your lawn. Try to remove the leaves within three to four days after they drop. Some trees drop their leaves all at once while other trees may drop their leaves slowly all winter. Sycamore trees, oak trees, beech trees, and willow trees are probably the worst varieties for dropping their leaves. Ginkgo, on the other hand, drop all their leaves in one day.

Leaves left on the lawn may cause fungus or snowmold problems that are much easier to prevent in the fall, than to cure in the spring.

¤ Fertilize with **Fall & Winter Fertilizer or Dr. Earth Lawn Food** sometime between early-October and late-November.

¤ Do not fertilize your lawn if you cannot water your lawn, and the weather is still hot and dry; wait until the temperatures cool down and it starts to rain or snow to apply your winter ferilizer.

¤ Mow your lawns 1.5" until the last mowing of the year. Then cut it short.

¤ Rake leaves. Do not let them remain on the lawn very long.

¤ Apply a lawn fungicide, to help prevent snowmold, if your lawn has had a snowmold problem in previous years.

Mowing Tips:

Lawn mowing is healthy for your lawn. You're trimming away the oldest part of the plant because grass grows from the bottom up. A higher cut – generally only trimming the top one-third of the plant – will shade the roots and encourage a deeper root system.

Mow your lawn when it is dry; not wet. Wet grass tends to plug up your lawn mower. Besides the extra mess, mowing while the lawn is wet can create a compaction problem. Wet thatch and soil is easily compacted by your weight, and by the weight of the lawn mower wheels.

Mow in the cool part of the day. Besides helping to keep you cool, your lawn will recover quicker after being mowed if the soil is cool.

Mow regularly. Don't wait until your lawn looks like an alfalfa field to mow it. Letting the lawn grow extra long and then removing most of the plant creates excessive stress within the plant and root system. Try to only remove 1/3 of the plant each time you mow.

Mow grass at a longer height in the heat of summer. Mow your lawn about 1.5" during the spring and fall. Mow your lawn to about 2" or even 2.5" long during the heat of

summer. Long grass provides extra shade for the root system, it helps prevent weeds, and it helps prevent water from evaporating as quickly.

Keep your lawn mower blade sharp. A dull blade tends to whip the grass rather than cutting it. A dull, brown tinge will appear a few days after mowing, if the blade was not sharp.

Should you collect/bag your grass clippings? Generally, **"No"**. If handled properly, grass clippings are actually beneficial to your lawn. Some of the benefits of leaving grass clippings on your lawn include:

¤ **Healthier Lawn:** clippings serve as fertilizer, they help maintain the thatch layer, and they help conserve needed moisture.

¤ **Time Savings:** you do not have to stop to empty the mower bag, and you do not need to fertilize as often.

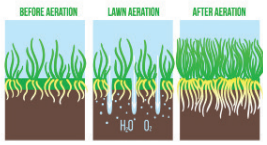
¤ **Cost Savings:** you save on both clipping disposal and fertilizer costs. You are also helping to be 'GREEN' by not filling up the landfill.

Grass clippings left on the lawn can generate up to 20% of your lawn's nitrogen needs. They can return previous applications of fertilizer to help nourish your lawn again and again.

Watering Tips:

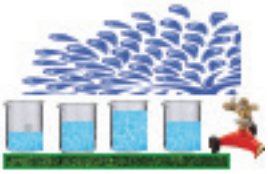
Water during the cool part of the day; either in the morning or in the evening. The lawn cannot use as much water efficiently during the hot weather, and, water evaporates much quicker during the heat of day. Do not water between 8 am and 6 pm.

Water infrequently. ***Do not water your lawn every day, even during the heat of summer.*** Change how often you water as the temperature changes. You may only need to water once a week in April. You may need to water twice a week in May. You may need to water three times a week in June and July. You may only need to water twice a week in August and September. You may only need to water once a week in October. Watch the weather and change your watering schedule accordingly.



Water deeply. Grass roots do not seek for water, they will just grow in the areas that already have moisture available. Water long enough so that the water can penetrate 4" or 5" deep into the soil. If the water is just running off the lawn and down the gutter, or draining into your neighbor's yard, the extra watering time is not benefiting your lawn. You may need to aerate more frequently or water your lawn differently. Try watering half as long, but twice, on the day that you normally water (do not water every day). Once the water starts to run off, instead of penetrating into the soil, stop watering. Wait for two or three hours and then apply the rest of the needed water, so the water can be absorbed.

Check How Much Water. A typical lawn needs about 1/2" of water each time you water it. Place several tuna fish cans or pie tins throughout your lawn. When you have about 1/2" of water in the container, you have watered long enough. You may have to water 10 minutes in the front yard and 30 minutes in the back yard. Don't be too surprised if each zone in your sprinkler system needs a different amount of time to apply the 1/2" of water.



Thatch Tips

Thatch is the organic layer between the soil line and the green blades of grass. Thatch naturally occurs in your lawn due to dead grass and from grass clippings. A small layer of thatch is beneficial. An extreme thatch buildup is detrimental and can cause several different problems, including a breeding ground for insects and an excellent harbor for lawn diseases. Too much thatch can also repel water and stop your lawn from growing normally. Measure the layer of thatch in your lawn. If the layer is less than 1/4" thick your lawn is healthy. If the layer is 1/4" to 1/2" thick you need to watch your lawn closely. If the thatch layer is more than 1/2" thick you need to remove some of the thatch.

Traditionally, power raking the lawn has been the way to remove excess thatch. However, the **Natural Guard Company** has an organic product called **Lawn & Garden Soil Activator** which helps remove thatch naturally. This product contains humic acid. Humic acid not only helps remove excessive thatch naturally but it also stimulates many microorganisms to grow that help the lawn's roots to be more healthy. It can help to improve the soil structure. Humic acid is a product that you can apply any time of the year; spring, summer, or fall. Humic acid can also be used in flower and vegetable gardens to help improve the health of the soil.

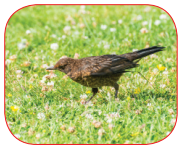
Humic Acid

Humic acid is a natural soil stimulant processed from some of the most concentrated organic materials available. Humic acid usually is composed of 50% carbon, 40% oxygen, 5% hydrogen, 3% nitrogen, 1% phosphorous, and 1% sulfur. Humic acid will vary from source to source. Most humic acid was formed when trees and vegetation underwent compaction and heating many thousands of years ago. Over the ages this organic material was slowly carbonized and became coal. During the compaction process many of the organic acids and esters, contained within the vegetation, were squeezed out and formed a pool on top of the coal. This pool dried and aged, and became a layer known as shale. This layer of shale is the source of humate, which contains humic acid. Because of its vegetative origin, this material is very rich and benefits all plants when incorporated into the soil.

Humic acid helps chelate many nutrients and binds them to soil particles. Chelated nutrients, that are attached to soil particles, are easier for plants to absorb and use. Magnesium, iron, calcium and many other 'trace elements' are just some of the nutrients that humic acid helps plants utilize more

effectively. Humic acid helps the fertilizer you apply reach the plants easier, and it also helps to release nutrients, already in the soil, that your plants have not previously been able to utilize. Put humic acid in the soil as you rototill your gardens in the spring. You can also spread humic acid on top of your lawn any time of the year. Humic acid is not a fertilizer but your plants will react as if you just fertilized them.

For more information, please read our Soil Activator Handout.



Grubs, Webworms, Billbugs

White grubs, sod webworms and billbugs are many different species of insects that invade the lawn. Confusion exists because they are all commonly called lawn grubs or grubworms. Although the control is often the same for all three of these insects, the time of application can be very different.

Damage from lawn insects is more noticeable during hot weather because the lawn cannot keep up with the damage that these insects cause and the grass dies more readily.

Sod webworms are the larvae of a small moth. The larvae are actually caterpillars and they feed on the leaf blades of the lawn. These caterpillars are fairly large and have a greenish appearance so they are easy to find. These pests are active in May and June so a spring treatment is necessary. They occasionally re-appear in August, which means a summer treatment may be necessary as well.

Billbugs are the larvae of a small black beetle. This beetle has a long elephant-like snout. The larvae of the billbug are very small. They resemble a small, white pebble except that they have a brownish head. These larvae are actively growing during the hot summer weather. They feed on the grass roots just below the surface. Treat for billbug problems mid-Summer (July - August). They love the heat and usually hatch next to a sidewalk or driveway but they can move and cause damage throughout the lawn.

Unfortunately by the time you see the signs of their damage, the lawn is already brown. After treating the lawn with an insecticide, your lawn will continue to look worse for a few weeks, before it starts to improve. Your lawn will not start looking good again until the weather begins to cool, and you can apply a fall fertilizer. You may need to re-seed, or lay new sod in the damaged areas, if you want your lawn to recover quickly.

White grubs are the larvae of various beetles. They are usually large and are easy to find. They feed on the roots of the lawn. They are active at different times of the summer, depending on what particular beetle species is in your lawn. Control is difficult only because you do not know when the larvae is going to be active.

Chinch Bugs This is a fairly new insect problem for lawns in Utah. They can destroy your lawn with little or no warning. Chinch bugs cause damage to lawns because of the way they feed. They live above the soil and feed on living grass plants by means of a piercing mouthpart called a stylet (similar to a mosquito). The insect inserts its stylet into the leaves, stems or crowns and sucks the juices out of the plant. The insect leaves behind its saliva, which has phytotoxic effects. The damage looks quite similar to drought symptoms. Many homeowners mistakenly assume that their lawn only needs more water.

Photo Credit: utahpests-usu-edu-htm-utah-pests-news-up-fall-2012-newsletter-chinch-bug-invasion.jpg

Chinch bug damage is usually at its worst during hot, dry times of year. They feed in sunny areas rather than in shady areas. For more information please read our Chinchbug handout.

Lawn insect problems may vary from year to year. The only insects that seems to be a problem every year are the billbugs and chinchbugs. Sod webworms and white grubs are not a regular problem, but they must be controlled when they do become a problem.

There are several different methods of control; chemical, physical, and natural. Unfortunately, chemicals and chemical recommendations change, so be sure to read the label of any insecticide you are going to apply. Make sure you use the right product, for the insects you are trying to control.

1. Apply a preventative insecticide late-May or early-June. **Merit** and **Arena** are two of the best products to use as a preventative because they can last an entire season: not the entire summer. They kill insects as they are hatching and at their immature stage. Merit does not kill the insects after they reach a certain stage, so don't use it later in the season - it will not work once the insect has matured.

2. Apply a curative insecticide at the first sign of damage. You can use either a liquid spray, or a granular insecticide to control these pests. **Bonide Insect and Grub Control**, **Amdro Lawn Insect Granules, Sevin Granules,** or **Eight Granules** are fairly quick acting insecticides that work well on the mature stages of grubs. These insecticides last about three to four weeks, so you may need to re-apply them monthly until the insect problem is controlled.

Most grub damage occurs during July and August so the lawn should be treated during this time. Sod webworms and some of the larger caterpillars, are usually active in May or in September. Sod webworms are easy to find and are sometimes easier to control because the lawn is not under as much heat stress that time of year.

3. Mow the grass high; at least 2.5" to 3" tall. Beetles prefer to lay their eggs in short grass. Tall grass withstands heat stress better so the damage is less apparent.

4. Water deeply but infrequently. Beetle eggs need moisture to hatch. They will dry out and die if they do not get enough water while they hatch.

5. Kill both the adults and the larvae with aerating sandals. You can buy strap-on plastic sandals with 1.5 inch spikes that will aerate your lawn, and impale grubs, as you walk

over your lawn. Use this method in the late-spring and summer, when the insects are near the surface.

Lawn Weeds

Unfortunately chemicals and chemical recommendations change, so be sure to read the label of any herbicide you are going to apply. Make sure you use the right product for the weeds you are trying to control.

Crabgrass is the name everyone uses to describe almost every kind of *'grassy'* weed they find in their lawn. Fortunately, true crabgrass dies each winter giving us a chance to kill its seed as it starts to grow the next spring. Crabgrass doesn't start to show up, along the edges of sidewalks, flower beds, and driveways, etc., until the middle of the summer. Crabgrass is not the *'weed grass'* that you see growing in your lawn during the winter and spring.

Many crabgrass preventers only last 60 to 90 days. When they quit working, crabgrass plants can still start to germinate and grow during the summer, even though you applied crabgrass preventer when you are supposed to in the spring.

If you see signs of crabgrass plants starting to show up in the summer, you can spray them with a **Liquid Crabgrass Killer.** Spray during July and August to kill the young crabgrass plants before they mature and start to produce seeds. This spray will also kill many other annual grassy weeds in the lawn such as foxtail, watergrass, barnyard grass and goosegrass.

Don't spray crabgrass plants too late in the summer because the **Liquid Crabgrass Killers** will not kill the weeds once they reach a certain stage of growth. You may have to spray two or three times during the summer and fall to completely control all of the young crabgrass plants. Spray the entire area where you have these unwanted grasses because the spray usually kills all the young plants, even the ones you don't actually see.

When crabgrass plants start to produce seeds, it is usually too late to kill the plant with chemicals. You will just have to physically pull them out. These **Liquid Crabgrass Killers** will not kill any of the perennial lawn grasses, just the annual grass varieties.

Broad-leaf weeds are another type of lawn weeds that need regular attention, especially in the spring and fall. Do not forget to control the dandelions, clover, and oxalis before the heat of summer arrives. Be extremely careful if you try to control broadleaf weeds when the temperature is above 85º F. You may have to wait to control them after the heat of summer is past.

Spray them with **Bonide Weadbeater** or **Fertilome Weed Free Zone.** You may need to spray some weeds several times, at two week intervals, to completely control them. Mix spreader-sticker with all your weed sprays because many weeds have leaves that repel water. If the weed killer doesn't stick to the leaf long enough to be absorbed, the chemical will not kill the weed. Oxalis, spurge, and violets are probably the hardest lawn weeds to kill because of this problem, be extra persistent with them.

Be careful, broadleaf weed killers can also kill petunias, tomatoes, roses, grape vines, and many other trees, shrubs, and flowers in your yard, or in your neighbor's yard. Spray on a calm day and when the temperature will stay below 85º F for 24 hours. Weed killers volatilize (evaporate) when the temperature is too warm and may then drift on to other plants and possibly kill them too.

Summer Weed Control Tip: Do not spray your entire lawn with any of the broadleaf weed killers during the heat of summer. 'Spot-treat' small areas of the lawn during the summer. Always spot-treat for weeds during the cool part of the day, and never on a windy day.

Fall is actually the best time to kill many lawn weeds including clover, oxalis, dandelions, and morning glory. Watch the weather closely and start treating broadleaf weeds as soon as the temperature will stay below 85º for 24 hours. You can even wait until after a light frost to control clover and morning glory. Oxalis is probably the hardest of these weeds to kill because its goes dormant so early in the fall. Once a weed is dormant, broadleaf weed killers will not kill it.

Morning Glory Control

Wild Morning Glory ↑
Good Morning Glory ↓

Wild morning glory is also known as field bindweed and devil gut. Do not confuse wild morning glory with the annual morning glory vines that are easily controlled and bloom beautifully all summer. Wild morning glory grows in almost every part of the world and is one of nature's most persistent plants, with roots penetrating to a depth of more than ten feet. It also produces seeds that may germinate over a 20 year period. Wild morning glory is a tough problem in your yard, but you can control it if you have the persistence.

Chemical controls such as **WeedBeater, Kleenup, Killzall,** or **Roundup** will kill this weed - but timing is critical. The best time to spray wild morning glory is in the fall, as soon as the temperature lowers to 40°F at night, and while it is still growing. The more leaves that are present, the more effectively the chemical will be absorbed and translocated throughout the plant. Spraying after the first frost, the one that kills your tomatoes and cucumbers, is the best time of the entire year to kill morning glory. After the first frost, morning glory starts going dormant by moving sugars from the leaves back into the root system for winter storage. So, with a fall spray, you can get more of the herbicide down deep into the root system and kill it.

Although a single application of any one of these weed killers will greatly reduce your morning glory infestation, you will probably not eradicate the weed with just one application, or even in one year. Young morning glory plants may arise in the spring from roots that weren't completely killed the previous year. Seeds may also germinate for several more years to come. Regular cultivation of your yard

during the summer will give you the chance to remove any young plants, before they have a chance to mature and become a real problem. For more information please read our Morning Glory handout.

Lawn Diseases

Lawn diseases are much harder to control than lawn insects. Many lawn diseases persist for several years before you can get them completely under control. Timing is one critical factor. You have to apply the fungicide at the correct stage of the disease development for it to have any impact on the disease. You may have to re-apply the fungicide during the summer, and sometimes you may have to apply it for several years.

Sometimes the best way to control bad bacteria or fungus is by using an organic fertilizer. **Dr. Earth Lawn Fertilizer** contains many beneficial bacteria that can help your lawn grow much better than by just using normal chemical fertilizers. A side benefit is that some of these beneficial bacteria may also help to eliminate many harmful bacteria and fungus problems. Unfortunately, organic controls are often much slower getting rid of existing problems than chemical controls. However, they usually give excellent long term controls - eliminating the need for future chemical controls.

There are several different methods of control; chemical, physical, and natural. Unfortunately chemicals and chemical recommendations change, so be sure to read the label of any fungicide you are going to apply. Make sure you use the right product for the disease you are trying to control.

Sometimes the best way to control lawn diseases is to prevent them from starting in the first place. A few excellent preventative measures are:

¤ Plant several different varieties of grass in your lawn. If one variety is susceptible to a certain disease, the other varieties may be resistant to it. Buy the newer hybrid varieties rather than the older, cheaper varieties of grass seed. It will save you money in the long run.

¤ Water correctly. Too much water is one reason that lawn diseases start to develop. Contrary to an old wives's tale, watering at night does not necessarily create disease problems. However, too much water can create many unnecessary problems that may lead to a lawn disease problem.

¤ Poor drainage can be just as bad for a lawn as too much water. Roots need oxygen to grow. If the soil does not drain, there is not any oxygen in the soil for the roots to use. This condition can make a lawn more susceptible to a disease.

¤ Apply Humic Acid every year or two. Sometimes the best control for harmful bacteria is to promote beneficial bacteria to grow faster.

¤ Use a fertilizer high in sulfur.

¤ Fertilize with extra iron every few years.

¤ Over-seed with varieties of grass that are not susceptible to that particular disease. You may need to use **Perennial Rye Grass** or **Hard Fescue Grass** instead of just planting the traditional **Kentucky Bluegrass.**

¤ Fertilize with an organic base fertilizer that supplies beneficial bacteria to the soil, such as **Dr. Earth Lawn Food.**

Fairy Ring

Fairy rings may appear in a variety of ways in lawns. The most common is large rings of tall, dark-green grass. Mushrooms often appear within these rings. Another less common symptom of a fairy ring is an arc of dead, brown grass.

No one is exactly sure what stimulates fairy rings to start forming or where the fungus spores come from. However, some believe that gases from decaying organic material buried in the soil (old stumps, roots, or even 2x4's from the construction process) stimulate the fungus spores to start growing. When the conditions are right, toadstools show up in the dark-green ring. Sometimes the grass in the center of the ring dies but most of the time it stays green. Some years the fairy ring may remain dormant and other years the disease may produce a nice dark-green ring of grass.

Unfortunately there is not an easy control for fairy ring, but you can help manage the problem, at least to lessen the visual effects. Do not fertilize heavily, but fertilize more frequently so that all the grass will grow at the same rate and have the same coloring. Aerate your lawn occasionally and deep-water the rings often, to help water penetrate down into the fairy ring fungus.

The only sure control for fairy ring is to dig up the entire ring, find the organic food source, and remove as much of the fairy ring fungi as you can. Sound easy? Not so! The fairy ring fungi are usually 18" to 24" deep in the soil.

Unfortunately, chemical control of fairy ring is very difficult. There are some chemicals that are listed for use on fairy rings, but do not expect very good results. For more information, please read our Fairy Ring Handout.

Fusarium Blight - Patch

Do not mistake Fusarium with Fairy Ring. Fairy ring does not always kill the grass. Fairy ring usually makes a dark-green circle with little toadstools. Fusarium always kills the grass. This disease causes dead half-circles or sometimes complete dead circles in the lawn. Check just below the soil line for a white powder in the soil. If you find this white powder, in the dead area, then aerate the spot and saturate the area with a mixture of liquid dish soap and water. Mix 5 to 10 tablespoons of dish soap per gallon of water. Use 5 to 10 gallons of water on each ring.

After treating with the dish soap and water mixture, apply a lawn fungicide such as **Infuse, Fungonil,** or **Fertilome Sys-**

Using a pesticide, except as registered by the manufacturer, is a violation of the law. The results of misusing a pesticide may damage your plants or kill unwanted targets.

Whenever you use a pesticide, pay special attention to the health and safety recommendations of the manufacturer. You must take special precautions to assure the safety of people who may come in contact with the product, and to prevent contamination. Wear the proper clothing, choose an applicator that is appropriate for your situation, and use the proper pesticide.

Always Read The Label of All the Chemicals You Are Going to Use. Check the label to find out if the chemical is the correct product for the pest you are trying to control.

When applying any garden pesticide, always wear appropriate protective clothing – long pants, long sleeves, a hat, chemical-resistant gloves (not your kitchen rubber gloves), and anti-splash goggles. Wash your hands and face after use, and launder your clothes.

temic Fungicide. Repeat the procedure again in 3 to 4 weeks and possibly a third time a month later.

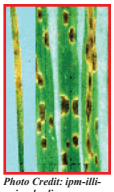


Photo Credit: ipm-illinois-edu-diseases-series300-rpd309.gif

Melting Out - *helminthosporium*

This disease makes the lawn look like it has billbug damage, or that the lawn is dying from the lack of water. This disease causes yellow, brown, or purple lesions on the blades of grass. As the lesions progress, the entire blade of grass turns brown and dies to the ground. The roots usually start to rot and die during the heat of summer. All lawns have some of these lesions on their blades. However, if there are a lot of the blades of grass with these lesions, the disease is active and it is killing the lawn.

Spray the infected area (plus a big area around the infected area) with a fungicide such as **Infuse, Fungonil** (Daconil)**,** or **Fertilome Systemic Fungicide**. Repeat every 3 to 5 weeks for two or three more applications. Once the disease is under control, lightly rake and reseed the area with Magic Carpet Grass Seed or with Necrotic Ringspot Resistant Grass Seed. New grass seed will help the area recover and look better much sooner. These seed mixtures have several varieties of Kentucky Bluegrasses or Perennial Ryegrasses that are fairly resistant to many lawn diseases.

Necrotic Ring Spot & Take All Patch

These two diseases kill your lawn and chemical controls are not very successful in stopping them. These diseases are hard to diagnose because their symptoms are very similar to melting out. Unfortunately, the fungicides that are effective in controlling melting out do not work on either Necrotic Ring Spot or Take All Patch.

The best chemical treatment for these two diseases is to hire a professional lawn care company to spray your lawn. They may use **Rubigan,** or some other chemicals that you cannot buy, or some that you definitely do not want to apply yourself.

Infuse (Banner) and **F-Stop Lawn Fungicide (Eagle)** are fungicides that are labeled for homeowners to use to control these diseases. Unfortunately, they do not seem to be very effective mainly because of timing and frequency issues. Timing the application of fungicides is very critical in controlling all diseases, especially these two. You also have to re-apply the fungicide several times, at the right time of course, for several years, to completely control these diseases. The problem is that it is very hard to know when the right time is. The right time depends on the soil temperature, moisture conditions, and growth rate; not on the calendar.

The only sure treatment to eliminate these two diseases is to 'over-seed' the entire area with varieties of grass that are resistant to them. There are a few varieties of Kentucky bluegrass that are somewhat resistant to these diseases, but they are not 100% resistant. Hard fescue and perennial ryegrass are the best varieties of grass to choose. Hard fescue and perennial ryegrass have a little more coarse texture than the traditional Kentucky Bluegrass, but they still make a nice lawn and they are resistant to many diseases.

For more information, please read our ***Lawn Disease Handout*** and our ***Necrotic Ringspot Handout***.

Also, the professionals at the Ferta Lawn Company, Frodsham Lawn Care (and many other lawn care companies) are up to date on diagnosing and controlling these particular diseases; give them a call for additional information and help.

Rust

Photo Credit: maine.gov-dacf-php-gotpests-diseases-turf-rust.jpg

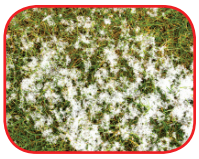
This disease appears as an orange or yellowish-orange powder on grass leaves. As you walk through the lawn, your shoes turn orange (rusty) and you track the powder (Rust Spores) to other areas of the yard and even into the house. Rust is most prevalent in the late-summer and fall, when the lawn's growth rate slows down. Cool nights, with heavy dew, followed by hot sunny weather also helps stimulate rust to develop.

Fortunately, rust is not one of the real serious lawn diseases that actually kills the grass. However, rust is a nuisance, and it can weaken the lawn so that it is susceptible to other lawn problems. Rust is one of the easiest lawn diseases to take care of and control.

The best control for rust is good turf management. Water early in the morning so the blades of grass can dry out. Fertilize regularly to keep the growth rate consistent. Bag and discard the clippings of infected grass to help prevent further spread of the disease.

If these cultural measures do not adequately control rust in your lawn, you can spray with **Infuse** (Banner), **Fungaway** (Bayleton), **Fertilome Systemic Fungicide** (Banner), or **Multi-Purpose Fungicide** (Daconil) to help eliminate this disease problem. One or two applications should help get this disease under control. You do not need to spray every year, to prevent this disease, unless it has been a problem in your lawn for several years in a row.

Snow Mold



Snow mold is a disease that grows and develops during the cold winter months under a protective, insulating blanket of snow. It is a major problem when snow falls on unfrozen, wet lawns and the snow remains covering the lawn for extended periods of time. You don't know your lawn has a problem until the snow melts.

As the snow melts, patches of gray, white, or pink mold appear on the blades of grass. The mold dies quickly, once the protective blanket of snow melts. Unfortunately, by that time the blades of grass have turned yellow or brown. The lawn has irregular patches of dead grass. These dead patches of grass, that had a snow mold problem, will not start to recover until the soil starts to warm up in the spring. Your lawn may look unsightly for a few weeks or months.

The best snow mold control is to prevent it from starting in the first place. Eliminate the conditions that promote snow mold development. Mow your lawn short the last time you mow your lawn for the year. Catch and remove

the grass clippings in the late-fall and early-winter. Remove all leaves and other debris that might provide insulation from the cold. Fluff the grass if it has matted down. Do not pile snow in areas that do not melt easily. Help snow melt faster in troublesome areas by spreading sand or fireplace ashes on top of the snow. Do not use ashes if you burn plastic or cardboard in your fireplace.

Occasionally, snow mold is a problem that cannot be prevented just by turf management. If snow mold has been a problem in your lawn for several years, you can apply a fungicide on the lawn in the fall. Wait to apply it until after you mow the lawn for the last time of the year. Apply the fungicide before the snow starts to fall.

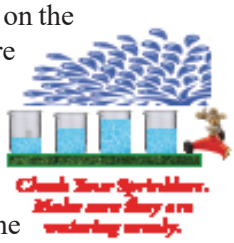
Infuse (Banner), **Fungaway** (Bayleton), and **Fertilome Systemic Insecticide** (Banner) are all labeled to control Snow Mold.

In the spring, once the snow melts, if you see patches of snow mold in the lawn, wait until the lawn dries out and then leaf rake the area. Fluff up the matted grass so air can help kill the snow mold disease quickly. Once the grass is fluffed up, snow mold dies on its own so you do not need to spray it. Snow mold goes away by itself in the spring and it doesn't return again until winter.

A Mistaken 'Lawn Disease'

A very common lawn problem during the summer is simply the lack of water when the weather gets hot. All it takes to damage a lawn, is for the roots to completely dry out for just an hour or two during the hot weather. As a form of self-preservation, grass becomes dormant after a stretch of hot and dry conditions.

Dirt inside a sprinkler head, something blocking a portion of the sprinkler's pattern, sprinkler heads spaced too far apart, letting the neighbor boy take care of your lawn while you are on vacation, or just forgetting to turn on the sprinklers when you are supposed to, are just a few of the common problems that frequently occur during the summer.



Cheer up. This problem will take care of itself. You do not have to buy anything special, or do anything out of the ordinary. Once a lawn dries out, it takes about 3 to 4 weeks to look good again, no matter what you do to help it. Many people mistakenly blame a lawn disease, or a grub, for the problem, and start treating for those problems.

Check your lawn. If the lawn is brown just because it dried out, it does not do any good to give the lawn extra water, more fertilizer, or spray for insects or diseases. In fact, if the lawn was dry, many lawn insects have either died, or moved to another area to live. The same with lawn diseases: many lawn diseases disappear when the lawn dies.

The lawn just needs time to recover. Water normally and wait to fertilize the lawn until the weather cools down in the fall. In severe cases, you may need to over-seed the affected area, but in most instances the lawn will simply recover on its own - given time.

More Resources

http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/snow-mold08.pdf
http://utahpests.usu.edu/htm/utah-pests-news/up-fall-2012-newsletter/chinch-bug-invasion/
http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/necrotic-ring-spot08.pdf
http://utahpests.usu.edu/IPM/htm/ornamentals/landscape-insects-and-diseases/turf-disease-in-utah/
http://utahpests.usu.edu/IPM/htm/ornamentals/landscape-insects-and-diseases/take-all-patch/
http://utahpests.usu.edu/IPM/htm/ornamentals/landscape-insects-and-diseases/turf10/

Don't Become Overwhelmed.

We have listed many tips for lawns in northern Utah. Not every lawn has all of these needs. Pick and choose those tips that are specific to your lawn's requirements.