

## TALL FESCUE APPLICATION SCHEDULE

First and most important: please read, understand and follow the label of every bag of fertilizer, herbicide, etc. before you apply it to your yard or garden. You will save yourself many headaches in the long run.

Next, remember that every application is relative to your size yard. This is very important to understand because “a bag” of fertilizer will only treat so much area. In other words, “a bag” of fertilizer may cover your neighbor’s yard of 5,000 sf., but you may need 2 bags to cover 10,000 sf. Tip: find your survey (it should give your properties’ square footage), then subtract the square footage of the house, drive, walks, etc. to obtain the amount of turf area you need to treat. With that very important piece of information you can accurately follow this application schedule.

This starts at the beginning of the year, but pick it up as soon as you can/

**End of February:** (about when Forsythia is in full bloom). Apply crabgrass preventer with fertilizer.

**Mid April:** Apply Milorganite, and (optional) apply crabgrass preventer without fertilizer.

**Throughout Summer:** Spot spray for weeds with Weed-B-Gone or equivalent, discontinue about a month before the next application.

**Mid September:** Get ready to spend some money! You will need about 5 to 8 lbs. of grass seed per 1000 sf of turf area, starter fertilizer and lime (but only if you need it). Aerate first, then apply the other items, order is not important.

**On or about Halloween, Thanksgiving AND Christmas:** Apply a winterizer fertilizer—there are several good products on the market. Do not agonize over these, just buy one (enough for three (3) applications) and put down the recommended amount. Another Tip: Winter is when most people do not focus on their turf, because they want to “put the yard to bed” for this season. But this is when Tall Fescue needs to be fed.

### 10 STEPS TO A BETTER TALL FESCUE LAWN

- 1) **Get a soil test.** Don't continue to read this without picking up the phone and calling the NC Cooperative Extension Agency in your county for soil test kits.
- 2) **READ THE LABEL!!!!** On a bag of grass seed, fertilizer, but especially on any PESTICIDE! You will save yourself a great deal of headaches and mistakes.
- 3) **Aerate and overseed every September**, with the best grass seed blend you can afford, no matter how old your lawn is. And don't forget the starter fertilizer.
- 4) **Add lime**, only if you need to. Refer back to your soil test results.
- 5) **Don't bag your grass clippings.** 90% of thatch comes from dead grass roots, not dead grass clippings. If you aerate every fall, you will never have a thatch problem.
- 6) **Cut your grass high.** 3.5" to 4" is best for Tall Fescue. This is typically the highest setting on most lawn mowers.
- 7) **Cut your grass as frequently as needed.** Always use shape blades and vary the cutting pattern.
- 8) **Water less frequently, but deeply.** This will encourage a deep root system.
- 9) It may take all week to water your lawn properly if you do not have an irrigation system. Avoid watering frequently and lightly as this encourages a shallow root system.
- 10) **Spring is the time to control weeds.** Grass seed is not compatible with crabgrass control or broadleaf weed control. So worry about growing grass in the Fall and controlling weeds in the Spring. By the Spring, the young grass plants are hardy enough to take the beating of a herbicide. I prefer to spot spray for broadleaf weeds in the Spring and Summer.
- 11) **Fall is the time to fertilize** your Tall Fescue lawn...**4 times!** You will get the best bang for your buck by fertilizing once per month starting in September (after aerating and seeding), then following up with applications on or about Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Avoid the temptation to fertilize in the Spring. Crabgrass control with fertilizer is acceptable in the Spring provided the first number of the analysis is not greater than 20 (the percentage of Nitrogen). Big Nitrogen applications in the Spring greatly increases the risk of brown patch (fungus). However, fertilizers with an organic source of Nitrogen (such as Milorganite) may be applied in the Spring or even the hottest part of the Summer.