



## ST. AUGUSTINE TURF GRASS

*St. Augustine grass is one of the most commonly grown grasses in the Lowcountry. It requires 2-3 hours of sun to do well. This grass is often dormant in the winter and turns brown but it will green-up in the spring.*

### Mowing

Maintain sharp mower blades to keep injury of the grass to a minimum. For a healthier turf, cut at 2½" to 3½". Cutting too short will encourage a shallow root system that is less tolerant to drought and temperature extremes.

Mulch in the clippings, except when you are treating for a fungus or if the clippings remain as unsightly clumps. It has been found that clippings **do not** contribute to thatch accumulation.

### Watering

Normal weekly watering should be 1" to 1¼". Use your irrigation system as a supplement to rainfall. Install a rain shutoff device to the irrigation system if possible. Water early in the morning for best results. During the winter months water once a month if there has been no rainfall. Also check your irrigation system for proper operation.

### Fertilization

Before performing any fertilization we recommend having a soil test done. Clemson Extension Service can do this for you for a nominal fee. The information you receive is very helpful.

We recommend fertilizing in **April** (after full green-up) and **late August** using a complete fertilizer such as 16-4-8. Use this at a rate of ½lb. -1 lb. of Nitrogen/1000 sq. ft. For 1 lb. Nitrogen/1000 sq. ft., use 6.5 lbs. of 16-4-8 per 1000 sq. ft. Higher rates can be applied, but only do so if directed through a soil test. For a stronger root system, use a true winterizer with no nitrogen or phosphorous. We recommend 0-0-25 applied in early October at a rate of 4 pounds per 1000 sq. ft.

### Thatch

One-half inch or less is considered good. Excess thatch can be caused by a variety of reasons. It can be kept under control by irrigating the lawn properly, mowing at the recommended height and frequency, monitoring the pH of the soil, and by fertilizing correctly.

If you do have excessive thatch, a "frequent, light top-dressing (<½") has been shown to be the most effective method of reducing thatch." (T.C. Hale, Ph.D.)

### Weeds

The best method to control weeds is by keeping a healthy, vigorous turf. In addition, use of a pre-emergent herbicide can keep the majority of weeds from becoming a menace. Use pre-emergent 3-4 times a year for best results. Be sure to alternate pre-emergent

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## **Important dates**

for St. Augustine Lawn

### **February 14:**

Pre-emergent herbicide for weeds. We recommend Scotts Halts.

### **March:**

Water as needed depending on rainfall.

### **April 15:**

Pre-emergent herbicide for weeds (Hi-Yield with benefin/trifluralin). Fertilize after full green-up with 16-4-8.

### **Mid May:**

Aerate entire lawn with a core aerator.

### **June/July:**

Use granular Ironite for a quick lush green.

### **August:**

Apply 2<sup>nd</sup> application of 16-4-8 toward the end of the month.

### **September 4:**

Pre-emergent herbicide for weeds (Halts)

### **October:**

Apply 0-0-25 lawn fertilizer.

### **November:**

Water as needed depending on rainfall.

### **December/January:**

Apply last application of pre-emergent in December if needed. Water as needed depending on rainfall.

herbicides. If you have existing weeds, bring in a sample or a close-up picture so that a salesperson can assist you with a post-emergent herbicide.

## **Insects**

Follow these simple tests to check for grubs, chinch bugs, and mole crickets:

**Chinch bugs** - Remove the ends of a coffee can and push it into the soil at the margin of the suspected damage and fill it with water. If they are present, the chinch bugs should float to the surface in ~5 minutes.

**Grubs** - Cut 3 sides of a 1-ft. square piece of sod 2" deep with a shovel. Pull back the sod and check for white C shaped grubs. Based on the overall condition of the grass, treat if 8-10 grubs are present in the test area.

**Mole crickets** - Mix 1-2 ounces of dishwashing soap in a 2-gallon bucket or watering pail. Drench a 2 sq. ft. area with the solution. If mole crickets are present they will surface in a few minutes. Since mole crickets are nocturnal insects, perform this test in the evening hours when the ground is moist.

For a 2-3 month control of all three insects, use Bayer Complete Insect Killer for Soil & Turf. Bayer Grub Control can also be used for protection against mole crickets & grubs.

*See a salesperson for more information.*

## **Disease Control**

Disease is ever present in turf albeit at low levels. The two most common diseases to look out for are large patch and gray leaf spot. Factors that can encourage disease are: low mowing height, excessive or deficient irrigation, compaction from high traffic areas, excessive shade and improper fertilization.

If disease damage is suspected, bring in a photo of the affected areas that we can properly diagnose it. A sample is also helpful. There are liquid and granular treatments available. *See a salesperson for details.*



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