

South Alabama Gardening: St. Augustine, Zoysia & Bermuda Maintenance

► Follow this comprehensive lawn care schedule from February to December for optimal maintenance of St. Augustine, zoysia, and bermudagrass. Detailed instructions outline what is required for months when action is needed, covering essential tasks such as herbicide application, disease and pest management, mowing frequency, irrigation practices, and fertilization recommendations.

These lawn care recommendations offer general guidance on soil testing and lime application for soil pH adjustment and emphasize the importance of regular monitoring and proactive treatment to ensure the health and vigor of St. Augustine, zoysia, and bermudagrass lawns.

February

- Apply preemergent herbicide. (Find a complete list on the Alabama Extension website at www.aces.edu.)
- Search for Home Lawns: Chemical Weed Control IPM Guide at www.aces.edu.
- Postemergent herbicides can be applied based on current weed populations.

April

- Aerify compacted soils if needed. Signs of compaction include hard, bare soil and moss or algae growing on the soil surface.
- Begin regular mowing.
 - Once every 5 days if clippings are left on lawn. Once every 7 days if clippings are removed.
 - Generally, do not remove more than one-third of the grass blade per mowing. Mowing height:
 - St. Augustinegrass**—3.5 to 4 inches
 - Zoysiagrass**—1.75 to 2.5 inches
 - Bermudagrass**—1 to 2 inches
- Begin weekly irrigation if needed.
 - Wet the soil down to 4 to 6 inches.
 - Best time is between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
- If no rain occurs, continue irrigation until the grass is dormant for the winter.
- Map mole cricket activity for future treatments.



- Fertilize with 4-1-2 ratio fertilizer at a rate of 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. A soil test will give more accurate fertilizer and lime recommendations. For best results, conduct a soil test specific to your property. **Do not use weed and feed fertilizers.**
- Treat for fire ants with **baits**. If immediate results are desired, use a fire ant **killer**. Apply baits on warm days when ants are actively foraging. Large patch and other spot/patch diseases are common during this time of year on St. Augustine and zoysiagrass. Monitor for disease development; make fungicide applications if needed. (A complete link for chemical control is available on the Alabama Extension website at www.aces.edu. Search for Commercial Turf and Lawn IPM Guide.)

May

- Watch for spittlebugs and chinch bugs. Treat if needed.
- Apply ammonium sulfate, ammonium nitrate, or urea. Apply 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

June

- Apply preemergent herbicide if there is a history of re-occurring annual weeds. (**Read the label carefully; some products may have temperature and dormant stage restrictions.**)
- Apply post-emergent herbicide based on current weed populations. (Find a complete list at www.aces.edu. Search for Home Lawns: Chemical Weed Control IPM Guide.) Fertilize with a 4-1-2 ratio fertilizer at a rate of 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. A soil test will give you more accurate fertilizer and lime recommendations.
- Continue to watch for spittlebugs and chinch bugs and treat if needed. (Find a complete list at www.aces.edu. Search for Commercial Turf and Lawn IPM Guide: Insects)

July

- Treat for mole crickets in the areas mapped in April.
- Apply ammonium nitrate or equivalent, if more growth is desired, at 3 pounds per 1,000 feet².
- Continue to watch for spittlebugs and chinch bugs, and treat if needed.

August

- Fertilize with 4-1-2 ratio fertilizer at 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet or according to soil test results.
- Continue to treat for mole crickets in the areas mapped in April.

September

- Winterize weak turf with 4-1-2 ratio fertilizer at a rate of 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. (This treatment is **optional**. If the turf is in good condition and not under stress, omit unless soil test recommends more potassium)
- Treat for fire ants with **baits**. If immediate results are desired, use a fire ant **killer**.

October

- Apply preemergent herbicide. (Find a complete list at www.aces.edu. Search for Home Lawns: Chemical Weed Control IPM Guide.)
- Large patch and other spot/patch diseases are common during this time of year.
- Fungicide applications can be made to cure current infections and prevent winter/spring diseases.
 - Optional: Overseed with perennial ryegrass on bermudagrass turf. Not recommended for St. Augustine or zoysiagrass.

Do not use preemergent herbicide if overseeding.

November

- Soil test.

December

- Lime according to soil test.



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For more information, contact your county Extension office. Visit www.aces.edu/directory.

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