NUTRI LAWN Inc.

P.O. Box 522 · Chico, CA 95927 · (530) 891-1551· info@nutrilawn.net · www.nutrilawn.net

RP4 Newsletter 2019 Mid-Summer

Well, we're in the thick of it now; we've already seen triple digit weather in June. As the temperatures have increased, the pressures against North Valley lawns have gone up as well. Turf diseases, insects, and drought stress are common this time of year. For this round, our 4th of the year, we'll be applying our special blend fertilizer, treating for weeds, and keeping an eye out for common summer issues. Our service technicians will indicate any problems they encounter with your lawn on your invoice, usually with their recommendations for remedy. If you have any questions, feel free to call our office.

Drought Stress or Fungus? They often look very similar but are caused by opposite irrigation issues. Drought stress and dry spots occur due to a lack of water and are usually indicated by a discoloration of the lawn. It can start with a blueish-grayish cast but can eventually become yellow or brown. Fungus, on the other hand, is often very similar in appearance to drought stress to the untrained eye, but is actually caused by overwatering your lawn—fungi thrive in moist environments. To determine whether you have drought stress or fungus, you can complete the Screwdriver Test. Use a 4"-6" long screwdriver to drive into the soil. Ideally you would be easily able to drive the screwdriver all the way to the hilt, which indicates proper moisture to the bottom of the root zone. Try to compare the soil penetration of any discolored areas to a nice, lush green area. If the discoloration is caused by a lack of water, it will be more difficult to drive the screwdriver into the soil of the discolored area than the green area. If there are no green areas to compare, you should still be able to tell whether the lawn has been properly irrigated by how easily you can drive the screwdriver into the soil. If it doesn't easily drive all the way to the hilt, it probably is not being watered deep enough. If the result of your screwdriver test indicates a lack of water, you'll want to either increase your irrigation or check your sprinkler coverage to reduce dry spots. If it indicates plenty of water to the discolored area, you might have a fungal problem on your hands. If this is the case, call our office and we can send someone out to diagnose and treat.

Fungicide Treatments Hot weather often opens the door to lawn damaging fungus (the disease, not mushrooms which don't damage turf). If we see a problem while servicing your lawn we'll diagnose the disease and leave a descriptive brochure with your invoice. Our brochures are specific to the disease and will provide you with valuable information regarding chemical & non-chemical controls, such as watering practices, etc. As fungicides are an **additional charge**, after our diagnosis we wait for YOUR call. If you prefer that we use our discretion regarding when or if to treat an existing fungal problem, then please call the office and pre-authorize fungicide treatments. This is particularly important if you're going to be gone for any length of time during hot weather.

Proper Irrigation will continue to be an important factor in your lawn's health this summer. Most lawns in the North Valley can do fine on an every other day irrigation schedule in the summer. This schedule allows the surface blades and thatch to dry out between waterings, thus reducing fungal issues. A critical component is that when you do irrigate, you water to the depth of the roots (4"-6"). Shallow watering produces shallow roots, deeper watering encourages deeper root growth. With many conversions to low precipitation nozzles (MP Rotators, Toro from Cal Water giveaways), you must water longer to reach proper watering depths. These nozzles were designed to reduce runoff, but usually result in a much longer irrigation time than standard nozzles. Use the screwdriver test to determine how long each station must run with your particular system. You can start your irrigation and time it, checking the penetration of the soil periodically with a 4"-6" long screwdriver. When you are finally able to penetrate the soil easily all the way to the hilt of the screwdriver, you can check your timer and turn off the irrigation. That time will be the amount you want to set your irrigation timer to every time you irrigate. Make sure you irrigate early in the morning (no afternoon or evening watering!)

Spot Watering "A lawn without a dry spot is an overwatered lawn." All irrigation systems have a weakness or two. A hose or small garden sprinkler placed once a week can get you through the summer. Flooding 90% of the lawn with the entire irrigation system to satisfy the driest 10% of the lawn wastes water and leads to fungus.

Pulse Watering is an effective technique to reduce irrigation runoff, especially for sloped lawns or plantings with heavy soils. The idea is to split your total watering time up with breaks in between. For example, say your normal irrigation time is 20 minutes. You would set your controller to water for 10 minutes, wait 30 minutes to allow for the water to soak in, and then have a second start time to initiate another 10 minute irrigation cycle. The result is less runoff.

Nutgrass (Yellow Nutsedge) It's nutgrass season and we'd like to remind you that we can suppress nutgrass but will most likely never eliminate it. There are two extremely expensive chemistries that work well on emerged shoots. The challenge is the hundreds of underground nuts produced by the above ground plant. These nuts jettison the "umbilical cord" to the mother plant early on and can remain dormant for long periods of time, making them hard (if not impossible) to treat. We treat the adult plants when we see them, but expect it to be an ongoing battle. It is critical that no irrigation occur for at least 12 hours after nutgrass herbicide has been applied.

Sticky Drip If you are experiencing landscape trees or shrubs bombarding your walkways, patio furniture, or parked cars with tiny droplets of sticky sap this summer, your plant probably has an aphid or scale invasion. We can solve the problem with one of a number of control options which utilize a product that targets only those insects which feed on your plant's sap. If you want to say adios to the sticky drip, please call or email.

Lawn Moths We've been receiving calls regarding moths flying out of the lawn. Lawn moths are the adult forms of several different lawn feeding caterpillars. Moths flying out of the lawn don't necessarily indicate a problem, especially since the moths themselves do not feed on the turf. Most cool season lawns will host some adults and tolerate minor caterpillar populations. It's when caterpillar populations exceed a certain threshold and visually damage a lawn that insecticide treatment is needed. Just blasting all our lawns with insecticides because it is June or July is irresponsible and ineffective. Indicators of a feeding population can be increased bird activity on your lawn or small hand-sized, off-color spots in your lawn. A hands and knees inspection of said spots will reveal short, obviously chewed off grass blades with associated frass (aka poop pellets) at the base of the damaged blades. Our technicians are trained to look for these problems and will be on the lookout throughout the summer. If you think your lawn is experiencing damage from one of these pests, please contact our office.

Summer Lawn Tips

☑ *Mowing Height & Proper Edging* is important during hot weather. Some people resist raising their mowing height in the summer heat. We can usually predict who will get a fungus first every summer. Edge along sidewalks, etc. at a 90° angle. Scalping lawns and edges begs for weed invasion and makes it more susceptible to summer stress.

☑ *Please keep* areas surrounding your lawn relatively weed-free. Weeds allowed to populate (and seed) lawn borders eventually invade your lawn, making our job a lot harder. Opportunistic weeds like spurge and crabgrass are going to pressure our lawns this round. We control them the best we can. Please be patient and we'll do our best to keep you satisfied.

☑ *Expect less* in terms of performance from cool season turf in hot weather. We push our lawns to perform in the summer when we use them the most. Cool season lawns, by nature, want to "shut down" and be brown and funky (summer dormancy) when temperatures exceed 90° F. Lawns pushed to perform in hot weather are much more susceptible to fungus, disease, and insect pressure. We appreciate your understanding while we work diligently to protect your lawns this summer.