

Lawn Care by Season

SPRING

February and March

1. Check your soil's pH

Soil pH, a measure of the soil's acidity or alkalinity, can directly influence the strength and quality of your lawn. When the pH is below 7.0, the soil is said to be acidic; when above 7.0, it is alkaline. The pH of your soil should be between 6.5 and 7.0. Johnson's carries a wide range of pH test kits and meters. If needed, apply lime at the rate of 40-50 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. to raise the pH level 1 point. We stock *Soil Doctor* pelletized lime in 40 lb. bags. For larger areas, use *Green and Grow Fast Acting Lime*; a 30 lb. bag covers 5,000 sq. ft. **Never apply lime and fertilizer at the same time!**

2. Apply a pre-emergent (preventive) weed control

Let Mother Nature be your guide - a good rule of thumb is to apply preventive weed control products as forsythia (shrubs with vibrant yellow flowers that are the first flowers you usually see in spring) comes to bloom. Under most circumstances DO NOT RESEED for at least 8 weeks after using a pre-emergent weed control.

Organic Prevention and Control:

For organic weed prevention and control, Johnson's recommends *Espoma Corn Gluten* to prevent crabgrass and broadleaf weeds in your lawn. A 25 lb. bag covers 1,250 sq. ft. A new product is *Green-it Liquid Corn Gluten* in a 1/2 gallon ready-to-spray container that covers 2,000 sq. ft.

Chemical Prevention and Control:

Preen Lawn Crabgrass Control prevents and controls crabgrass for up to 4 weeks after the weeds have sprouted. It also prevents many other lawn weeds such as spurge and other grasses. This is a time-saving and easy product to use. A 15 lb. bag covers 5,000 sq. ft.

Dandelions and other broadleaf weeds are among the most troublesome problems in lawns. We recommend *Preen Lawn Weed Control* post-emergent. A 30 lb. bag covers 15,000 sq. ft.

A great product to use to prevent crabgrass and reseed at the same time is *Scotts Step 1 for Seeding*. The preventive in this product will not harm the germinating grass seed. A 22 lb. bag covers 5,000 sq. ft.



Lawn Care by Season

March through May

1. Reseed

The fall and early March to mid-April are the best times to reseed your lawn. If the soil is compacted, aerate your lawn to loose the soil. *Bond Aerator Spike Shoes* are a great way to do this and get some exercise at the same time. If you have a really large lawn, rent an aerator from a rental company. After aerating, work in *Bumper Crop* or *LeafGro* at the rate of 2 cu. ft. per 50 sq. ft.

Before reseeding, rake the lawn and apply a starter fertilizer like *Scotts Starter Fertilizer* at the rate of 3 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.

When reseeding, Johnson's recommends a high quality *tall fescue seed mix*. Tall fescues will grow in a very wide range of sun exposures and soils.

Cover the reseeded area with *Greenview Seed Accelerator*. This is a clean and efficient way to keep the seed moist and help it germinate faster. We carry two sizes of this product - a 10 lb. bag that covers 200 sq. ft. and a 30 lb. bag that covers 600 sq. ft. Another product that covers and protects recently seeded lawns is *TakSack*. One bale of this refined straw will cover 500 sq. ft. It contains tack to help hold down the straw and keep it from blowing away.

After reseeding, keep the area moist. Check the area in the morning and afternoon. Do not allow the seeded area to dry out while the seed is germinating. Johnson's has a complete line of hoses including soaker hoses, sprinklers, and timers to help you with this task.

2. Fertilize

Lawns are living things and have special nutritional needs. Most soils don't contain enough of the essential nutrients necessary to produce thick, thriving grass - nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Feeding your lawn with a fertilizer formulated for lawns is a must. A well-fed lawn is healthier and has a better root system which allows it to combat heat, cold, drought, and other stresses.

Organic Fertilizers:

Johnson's recommends using a slow release organic lawn fertilizer, such as *Espoma Organic Lawn Food (7-2-2)* with Bio-tone® beneficial microbes - microscopic living organisms that enrich the soil, promote faster greening, deeper roots, and better soil structure. A 30 lb. bag covers 2,500 sq. ft. Another great organic product is *Milorganite*, a slow release product that provides nitrogen and other nutrients over an 8-10 week period. A 36 lb. bag will cover 2,500 sq. ft. This product is 100% organic and is safe for your family, your pets, and the environment.

WASHINGTON, DC
4200 Wisconsin Ave, NW
at Van Ness St

www.johnsonsfloorists.com
KENSINGTON, MD
10313 Kensington Pkwy
next to the Post Office

OLNEY, MD
5011 Olney-Laytonsville Rd
Rt 108 and Zion Rd



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Chemical Fertilizers:

We stock Scotts Lawn Pro 4 Step Program products. Step 1 is a fertilizer that also prevents and controls crabgrass and should be applied between February and April. Step 2, a fertilizer with broadleaf weed control, should be applied between April and June. Step 3 should be applied in June, July or August, and is a fertilizer that feeds and strengthens lawns against heat and drought. Step 4 should be applied in the fall, September through November, and protects and strengthens your grass for a better spring lawn.

LATE SPRING AND SUMMER

April through August

1 . Control weeds

If you weren't able to apply a pre-emergent weed control in the early spring, you can still eliminate many broadleaf weeds in your lawn. *Preen Broadleaf Weed Control* eliminates all broadleaf weeds and does not harm your lawn. You can apply it anytime weeds are present. A 10 lb. bag covers 5,000 sq. ft.

For an easy to use liquid that controls weeds and crabgrass, *Bayer Advanced Lawn Weed and Crabgrass Control* comes in a concentrated form and a ready-to-use spray. If you have a problem with Bermuda grass, use *Bayer Advanced Bermuda Grass Killer* in a ready-to-spray container.

A good organic product that will spot kill weeds is *Burnout Organic Weed Control*. It comes in both a ready-to-use and concentrated form.

2. Water

For lawns to look their best over the hot, humid summer of the Washington, DC area, lawns need about 1 inch of water a week. Don't count on the quick thunderstorms of the area to really soak into the soil. Additional watering normally is required, but be careful not to overwater - the most common cause of fungi problems is poor watering practices. This seems strange, but overwatering, especially in the hot, summer months, can be more harmful to your lawn than not watering at all. Additionally, watering in the evening can leave your lawn damp for hours and allow fungi to get a foothold in your lawn. Watering your lawn in the morning will allow the sun to quickly evaporate any excess water. If you can't water your lawn in the morning, invest in hoses, sprinklers, and a timer. These are going to be cheaper in the long run than treating your lawn for diseases. Johnson's carries a wide-range of hoses, sprinklers, and timers that will help you with this task.

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SUMMER

June through August

1. Control grubs

If your garden attracts Japanese beetles, there's an excellent chance that there are grubs in your lawn. The best way to control the Japanese beetle population in your yard is to eliminate them in the larval stage - grubs. Grubs stay in the soil of your yard and garden, feeding on the roots of your grass and other vegetation.

Organic control:

An organic grub control is *Milky Spore*, a bacterium that is lethal to Japanese beetle grubs. Once Milky Spore is applied, the grubs ingest it as a normal part of their feeding. The more spores are in the area, the greater the chance of infection. Each infected grub dies within approximately 3 weeks and releases new spores. Milky spore can be applied at anytime as long as the ground is not frozen. A 10 oz. box covers 2,500 sq. ft. This product is safe and will not harm your family, your pets, or the environment.

Chemical control:

We carry *Scotts Grub Ex*, a non-organic grub control product. One application kills and prevents all season.

2. Control lawn fungi

Be on the look-out for lawn fungus. Lawn fungus problems include visible mushrooms and mold-like structures, and dead patches of grass caused by fungus in the soil. In addition to poor watering practices (see Water above), over-fertilizing and over-seeding can also be big problems. Between the soft, lush blades created by high nitrogen levels and the thick textures of dense grass blades, fungal spores will find it easy to jump from blade to blade as they are dispersed. *Bayer Advanced Fungus Control for Lawns* prevents and controls brown patch, dollar spot, red thread, mildew and many other fungi. This product is ready-to-spray and covers 5,000 sq. ft. It can be used anytime during the season and helps prevent fungal infections.

3. Control Insects

Insects in your lawn are not necessarily a bad thing, but some insects can do substantial damage to the lawn, and if you have children and pets and an infestation of ticks, you want to take care of the problem. To control ants, ticks, and other lawn insects such as cinch bugs, chiggers, and webworms, use *Bayer Complete Insect Killer*. This ready-to-spray product will cover a 5,000 sq. ft. lawn.

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Lawn Care by Season

FALL

September through November

Fall is the best time to reseed and feed your lawn.

1. Reseed in September

See Reseed under Spring: March through May

2. Fertilize in October or November

See Fertilize under Spring: March through May

Chemical Fertilizers:

Apply *Scotts Lawn Pro 4 Step Program, Step 4* to protect and strengthen your grass for a better, greener lawn in the spring.

Reapply *Green-It Liquid Corn Gluten* to help prevent weeds from germinating. Remember, if you apply a pre-emergent weed control prior to reseeding, wait for at least 8 weeks before sowing the seed.

NOTE: The Fertilizer Use Act of 2011 prohibits residents of the State of Maryland from applying fertilizers to lawns between November 15 and March 1, when the ground is frozen, and within 10 to 15 feet of waterways. This law was phased in and was fully implemented beginning October 1, 2013.

WINTER

December and January

TAKE A VACATION FROM YOUR LAWN!

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