

COLUMNS

Campbell Vaughn: Here are some tips to keep your lawns looking good when the weather cools

Campbell Vaughn Augusta Chronicle

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Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

Prepare lawns for cooler weather by raising mower blades and fertilizing (before September 15th).

Treat lawn fungus like grey leaf spot and large patch with a fungicide.

Apply pre-emergent weed control around September 15th and mid-December.

It is almost Labor Day and like it or not, summer will be ending. We have had a very hot and humid summer with a lot of rain. I know I have been mowing my grass a bunch, and a lot of people have been calling about an overabundance of weeds, which I think has a lot to do with the hurricane.

As we move from pools to football, I thought I would discuss some things we can do this time of year to get ready for plants to start slowing down and handling cooler weather on the horizon.

Since we do have a decent amount of time left in the growing season, there are things we can do to prolong the inevitable.

Campbell Vaughn: [Hurricane Helene did serious damage to the land. These plants can help it heal.](#)

Raise your lawnmower blade about a half of an inch on Bermuda lawns to keep them green. With all the rain we have had, you can add a little more nitrogen to

Bermuda and zoysia lawns but do it lightly and do it now. If you wait any longer, fertilizing will put the grass into turbo mode when it needs to be slowed down. Don't fertilize past Sept. 15.

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I am seeing a lot of fungus in St. Augustine and in zoysia. All this rain has made for some great growing conditions for fungi. Grey leaf spot is the most pronounced this year. If your St. Augustine looks puny, look for some yellowing leaf blades and pull one to inspect. If you have grey leaf spot fungus, the grass blade will have a yellow spot in the green leaf with grey margins. It is easy to spot. It usually won't kill your grass, but enough of it will damage it for sure.

Large patch fungus has started a little early so be on the lookout. It will show up as a round area that expands its radius with clearly defined yellowing of the grass on the margins. You can treat it now and again in mid-September. There is a great product called Scott's Disease EX that has a very good fungicide ingredient that is found in some commercial products called azoxystrobin. It is a great general-purpose chemical for fungus control. This Scotts product is good for the grey leaf spot as well.

If you missed March and June preemergence in your lawn, I am sure you are battling weeds. Try and treat some of the weeds before they produce seed or spread by rhizomes. Annual weeds will die when we get a good frost, but perennial weeds will sit idle and be ready to jump when we warm up in the spring. There are a lot of good chemicals to kill weeds in the lawn, but make sure you find the right one for the type of turf you have. For instance, 2,4-d is a great herbicide for broadleaf weeds in Bermuda and zoysia, but it will burn the heck out of St. Augustine and centipede.

Sept. 15 is the date we suggest putting out preemergence for cool season weeds in Bermuda, zoysia and St. Augustine. Poa annua, henbit and dandelions can take over in winter, so make sure to take charge before these weeds do. I like 0-0-7 with

prodiamine as a preemergence because it has 7% potassium. Potassium is good for root growth, and our soils don't hold that element readily. The active ingredients are a good general purpose weed suppressant. There are plenty of other preemergence products out there that can do a good job for you as well. If you are ambitious, mark on the calendar to add preemergence again in mid-December to get late winter germinating weeds.

Don't be afraid to use preemergence in your flower beds as well. I have seen an 85% weed reduction in flower and shrub beds from using these chemicals. Products like Barricade, Dimension and Preen are great. Just remember that these chemicals kill seeds so if you are planting something by seeding, be careful and read the label on the bag before you apply because there are some preemergence products you can use in the bed but not the lawn.

Spend a little time now and save yourself a lot of work this winter and spring.