

## Answers to the Most Common Turfgrass Management Questions

**1. What do you suggest to control nut grass in a yard?**

Nut Grass (Nutsedge) is a noxious weed that requires a selective herbicide to eradicate it. The most common herbicide for nutsedge treatment is Image. Depending on the severity of the infestation of nutsedge, multiple treatments may be required. [http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/docs/mpp\\_w\\_art\\_nutsedge.pdf](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/docs/mpp_w_art_nutsedge.pdf)

**2. What should be done to stop St. Augustine grass decline from taking over in an established landscape?**

Once SAD (St. Augustine Decline) has been introduced to your lawn there is nothing you can do to stop it. Rather there are steps you can take to prolong the life of your lawn and/or slowly transition your lawn to be SAD resistant. Applying fertilizers high in Iron will help disguise the discoloring of the leaves. Slowly replacing the declining/dead areas with more resistant varieties of St. Augustine will allow the new varieties to take over as the infected St. Augustine dies out.

<http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/turf/publications/staugdecline.html>

**3. How do you prevent sprinkler head damage when mowing?**

If your sprinkler heads are being damaged by mowers then two things may be occurring. Either the heads are too high and/or you are mowing too low. Only 1/3 of the leaf blade should be cut during each mowing and an audit of your sprinkler system will help determine any adjustments that need to be done to the heads.

**4. How do you make sure that no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade length is removed during any one mowing?**

Mowing more frequently will help ensure you do not mow more than 1/3 the leaf blade. Also, pay close attention to the height setting on your mower to make sure you are not mowing too low or high.

**5. Should you mow your yard in different patterns?**

Mowing your lawn in different patterns helps ensure that tire ruts do not begin to form in your turf. It also helps distribute the grass clipping uniformly throughout your lawn. This helps avoid the buildup of thatch. "Remember, mulch it don't bag it!"

**6. When should you aerate your yard? How often? How deeply?**

Aerating your lawn is a good annual practice to help ensure maximum nutrient absorption and the break down of thatch. Only aerate when the grass is actively growing and don't remove the plugs when you are done. The plugs hold valuable soil and nutrients for your lawn. Allow them to break down back into your lawn. Make two passes over your lawn to ensure even distribution and the aerator is set up for the proper depth and spacing of the plugs.

**7. When you hand pull weeds, do you have to put in new grass if there are bare spots or will the grass spread?**

The grass will spread back into where you removed the weeds. However, when you hand weed make sure you are removing the weed plant and its roots. If not most weeds will return from the roots that remain. Also, filling bare spots in your lawn helps discourage new weeds from taking residence.

**8. What can be done with mounds of tiny round black pellets found in St. Augustine grass?**

These mounds can be a sign of both the good and the bad. (Possibly earth worms) Excavate a small area around one of the mounds to see what you find. Proper identification of the culprit will help determine if they are good or bad. Your local extension office can help you identify the cause.

**9. How about using corn gluten on your lawn?**

Corn Gluten is an organic form of pre-emergent. It is effective in helping prevent weeds in your turf and it is also effective in eradicating crabgrass with multiple applications.

**10. What is the best way to get rid of grub worms?**

The best way to treat grub worms is chemically. These products are sold at your local lawn supply store and are effective with proper application and timing. Follow the label closely. [http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/weekly\\_Q&A/p&dc\\_6.htm](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/weekly_Q&A/p&dc_6.htm)

**11. Is it true that automatic sprinkler systems do not water trees? How does one best water trees?** Automatic sprinkler systems do water trees. However, it depends on your system design as to if it is more surface watering or deep water. Most trees appreciate deep watering and pop-up systems are not typically set up to offer this. Drip systems offer more deep watering. Run your system to water deeper/longer and less frequently to ensure a deep watering. Also, have your system audited to ensure proper coverage and maximum operability.

**12. Do reel mowers mulch or cut leaves?**

Reel mowers offer a more precise clean cut to the leaf blade than a rotary mower. Reel mowers are designed to mulch. However, newer models have the option to bag. "Remember, mulch it don't bag it"

**13. How do you introduce new seed to a mature lawn?**

Introducing new seed to a mature lawn requires the existing lawn to be scalped down as close to the soil as possible. The new seeds need to make contact with the soil to germinate. This process is typically practiced to overseed a lawn with Rye or Fescue. This process is not recommended.

**14. Should you mulch leaves into the turf?**

Yes! Trees store up to 75% of their nutrients in their leaves. Mulching your leaves into your turf is free fertilizer to your turf and your other plants. This also reduces the amount of green waste we put in our landfills.

**15. Do you recommend the use of "weed 'n feed" products on your lawn?**

If you have mature trees and other ornamentals that would receive the chemicals in the weed n feed then you should refrain from using these products to prevent damage/death to these plants.

**16. Does coffee grounds sprinkled on lawn help raise the acidity for our alkaline soil?**

Coffee grounds are great additions to compost piles and once composted are the perfect natural fertilizer for your turf and beds.

**17. What is the best schedule for organic fertilizing?**

Have your soil tested whether you are fertilizing with organic or synthetic fertilizers. This will ensure the proper type and dosage of fertilizer is used. The best time to fertilize is in early spring right before new growth begins.

**18. How effective is Zoysia grass compared to Bermuda grass or St. Augustine grass?**

Zoysia is growing in popularity every year due to its lush growth, low maintenance and moderate drought tolerance. However, each property and/or situation is different. Consider the lighting, water, and maintenance the grass will receive and base your decision on those factors.

**19. How can you do with a yard that has been taken over by weeds? Reseed? Resod? What is the best process?**

The first step is to control/eradicate the weeds. Then you may have to patch those areas with sod or seed depending on your grass variety. A weed infestation does not always mean you have to replace your lawn. Once the weeds have been addressed, test your soil and from that test you will know what fertilizer is needed. Then audit your sprinkler system to ensure the grass is getting proper coverage. Give your grass a fighting chance before you replace it.

**20. How can you "revive" gaps between a lawn and a cement walkway, driveway, etc.?**

Majority of the problems with turf grass next to sidewalks and driveways is compaction, water, and heat transfer. Consider aerating your lawn and auditing your irrigation system for proper coverage.

**21. Do electric lawn mowers pollute as much as gas mowers?**

Electric mowers themselves do not produce any air pollutants. However, you have to take into account your electric provider and the air pollution they may cause during production of your electricity.

**22. What grass/plant can you plant under a Live Oak tree?**

You can use any type of turf grass under a Live Oak, but it all depends on the amount of light the grass will receive. If the tree has shaded out the area a more shade tolerant variety of St. Augustine may be more successful. However, a ground cover may be a better choice as the tree will continue to grow and cause more of a lighting issue the larger it gets. Note: make sure to keep all grass/plant material a good distance away from the trunk/root flare of the tree.

**23. Can you put Zoysia grass in bare spots of a lawn that has Bermuda or St. Augustine grass or do you have to replace the entire lawn?**

If you want to change to a different variety of turf grass it is recommended that you replace the entire lawn.

**24. What is the best way to sharpen lawn mower blades?**

The best way to sharpen rotary mower blades is with a bench grinder. However, it is recommended to take your blades, either rotary or reel, to a local mower shop to be sharpened properly.