



Owned & Operated by  
Jeff & Debra Melmer

## TID BIT

Homeowners beware termite swarm season is approaching!

Spring is around the corner and that means warmer weather; for many areas it also means termite swarm season.

Subterranean termites are the most common species of termites across the United States and are found in every state except Alaska. No matter how your home is constructed, where it is located or how old it is, it could be attacked by subterranean termites. They cause \$4-5 billion in damage each year in the U.S. alone. They are, in fact, the most serious threat your home may face.

Only a certified pest management professional can perform a thorough termite inspection...the first step toward termite control. If the inspection reveals that you have termites or conditions that are conducive for subterranean termites, we will recommend a treatment plan that will do away with them or prevent them.



## IS IT SPRING YET?

It is hard to believe that spring is here! I for one am happy to see this time of year come.

I do not like being cold and honestly it is just more challenging to keep our landscapes looking their best, especially when it comes to our turf.

October brought us an early cool down and November, being relatively cool throughout the month, really slowed our turf down and all was looking pretty good. Then the big rain event we had the day before Thanksgiving turned everything upside down; fungus took over throughout our area. Large Patch Fungus, Brown Patch Fungus or Zoysia Patch, which ever you prefer to call it; it is all the same.

It took most of December to clean this up and our Zoysias took the longest, mainly due to the fact that our Zoysia mostly goes dormant and recovery is slow. We do not want to push this grass to grow as it only encourages more issues and you see little to no response, even improving color through micro nutrient applications was difficult.

Since mid-December temperatures have gradually improved and through January up to mid to late February our Zoysias have improved with minimal growth, but overall improved color. This should continue into Spring. Normally we do not get an unusual cold event in late February; but unfortunately we did. OUCH! This could set us all back as far as our turf is concerned, alas we have no control over Mother Nature. At least we do not have to deal with what our northern friends and family have to contend with! I love living in Florida.

Our shrubs love the Fall season, less rain/irrigation and cooler temperatures takes a lot of stress off these plants. They get to slow down and recuperate.

Spring is a wonderful time of year, great temperatures and sunny days; it's a time for rejuvenation. It's wonderful when everything pops with new, fresh growth; many plants are in full bloom cycle and it's a good time of year to just enjoy being in the garden!

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season, enjoyed friends and family; we are looking forward to servicing your turf and attending to your shrub care needs for the upcoming season.

## SPRING TRIMMING

In this edition we will try to cover all plants that should or need to be cut back; plants that may need some extra trimming or plants that may not need any extra work at all. As a rule you should not cut more than 1/3 of the plant, but if needed, cut as far back as you feel necessary.

We sort of depend on the cold weather (frost or freeze) to force us into trimming plant material back; when it does not get that cold it makes it more difficult to trim back a seemingly healthy, good looking plant. If not done at this time, by late Summer it is so overgrown and we are out in a position of leave it, or trim it and hope it recovers from the stress.

Spring is the best season to accomplish all your extra yard work. Its cooler, the heat and the humidity are not present to stress out your plants. Spring is the time of year we get our best flush of new growth and your plants will regrow quickly. In some instances it gives us a whole growing season for plants to recover to desired levels.

We will try to list plants that require or are in need of an annual cut down. Below are some plants that may need some cut down as well as cut downs that are needed based on your landscape needs.

(Cont. on page 2)

## SPRING TRIMMING (Cont. from page 1)

### **Plants that need cutting down annually...in no particular order:**

Flax Lily      Plumbago      Jatropa      Fire Cracker Plant      Oleanders      Dwarf Liriope  
Australian Fire Bush      Ruellia      Pinwheel Jasmine      Cordyline (Hawaiian Ti Plants)

### **Plants that may need to be cut down or cut down to what is overgrown for its location or just looks messy or unkempt... again, in no particular order:**

Coontie Ferns      Cardboard Palms      Liriope      Hollies      Hibiscus      Nandina      Snow Plants  
Criminum Lilies      Crotons      Camelias      Ixora      Duranta      Boxwoods      Mondo Grass  
Lantana      Trinetts      Sago Palms      Eugenias      Loropetalum      Large Leaf Philodendrons  
Shell Ginger (other Ginger varieties as well)

**Ground Covers:** Jasmine

### **Plants that may need to be cut down...once the blooming cycle is over:**

Gardenias      Knock Out Roses      Drift Roses      Formosa Azaleas      Angel Wing      Downey Jasmine      Indian Hawthorne      Camelias

If you have larger plants that require cut down, such as Ligustrum Trees, Large Viburnum Hedges, Podocarpus, Larger Hollies (such as Nellie Stevens), Marinell, Oak Leaf, Luster Leaf Holly, Eggleston Holly or larger Camelias, these are plants that should have trimming reduced throughout the year and trimming should be done more selectively with hand clippers. This will reduce the stress created by constant shearing, will also reduce excessive shoot growth and will improve overall health vigor and appearance of these specimen plants. This will and should reduce maintenance time, your landscaper's time or the time you spend laboring in your garden.

Juniper is a plant that does not like a lot of trimming; be selective and try to avoid shearing if a Juniper has grown too large. You can try trimming, but you may have to pull it out and start over.

Many palms may need a cleanup of their browned fronds and seed pods, please minimize this trimming. It is better (healthier) for a palm to be full, a canopy of 180°–270° is ideal. Anything above 180° is very stressful and quite honestly just looks horrible, NEVER hurricane cut a palm. When a palm dies we ask why? Many environmental stresses are already in place: moisture, location and over trimming just add stress that can put a palm over the edge.

Over the past year we have communicated about the excessive trimming done on our landscapes. Many of you have paid heed to our advice and our landscape plants look much better over the past year; healthier, denser, less yellowing, less constant shearing and less stress. Ligustrum trees are our number one concern. It seems as though the thought I, if we have nothing to do, we can trim a Ligustrum. Hollies, Boxwoods and Podocarpus have all shown a better look without all the trimming.

## MINUTE WITH

Mike



### **Personal Customer Service**

What differentiates us from all the other companies out there? Personal Customer Service and Communication!

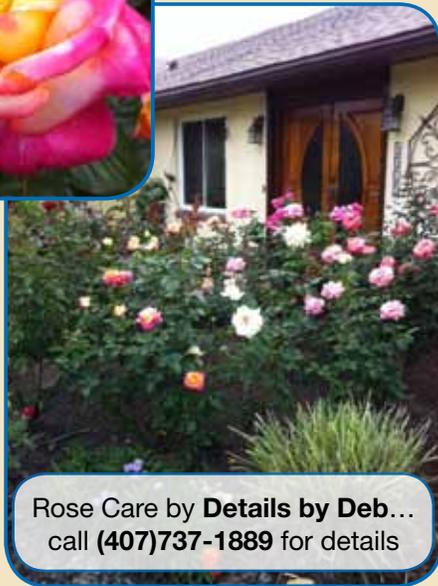
Our brand of service is not unique to business. It has been practiced for decades; but more often than not, it is a fading art in this fast paced world of technology and growth. How do we at Quality First make our brand work?

It starts with a dedicated and caring staff. Our motto is "We Care" and we really do!

From each phone call, email or mail inquiry, we make it a priority to respond as quickly as possible. From an administrative and technology standpoint, we have spared no expense in applying the latest technology to provide our customers with every convenience possible. With that said, technology is great; when it works properly! Thanks to our wonderful email customers, we recently discovered customers were receiving incomplete invoices or at times not receiving them at all! Additionally, inquiries to our website were not getting to us and therefore customers received no responses. This is not our brand of service!

We sincerely apologize to our customers for this inconvenience.

We believe we now have implemented the systems necessary to correct these problems. I would like to thank Michal Kolakowski of MK Consulting and Mark Amell with DMA consulting for their dedicated and caring support in implementing these new systems. I believe we have become more accurate and efficient in providing personal customer service to all of the customers of Quality First Lawn Shrub & Home Services. **THANK YOU!**



Rose Care by **Details by Deb...**  
call **(407)737-1889** for details



## CREPE MYRTLE

### **Our Crepe Myrtles...Please, do not commit Crepe murder!**

They do not need to be trimmed, period! It is a preference issue or maybe a location issue; trim nothing bigger than your finger: any outward or downward growing branches and any crisscrossing branches or just a general thinning is best for your poor Crepe Myrtles.

I have noticed more and more Crepe Myrtle trimming, in some cases as early as November; although we do not recommend this. Again, it becomes an issue of preference or to help get ahead of the leaf drop. This also seems to add a little different character to your landscape for this season.

## ZOYSIA TURF



It was not the best season for our Zoysia turf. With cooler temperatures in early October and rain through November, it took its toll on our Zoysia's color; the turf just did not want to green up.

For this season I believe the reason why the claim that Zoysia goes brown in the Winter. The Zoysia did not go all the way brown, but was difficult to look at an included what is called Large Patch

Fungus (to us old timers); "Brown Patch Fungus" really affected our Zoysia turf appearance. It has been two long months in my own backyard as my Zoysia looks bad. There is not much we can do but wait it out. If you fertilize it you get more fungus and weeds with little to no improvement in color. For those of us who want it green the best option is to paint it; this is a wonderful option and really enhances the color of your turf. With the cooler temperatures the lawn paint will last 6-8 weeks, but will fade as the turf grows. Painting is a great option, but also an expensive one. Now that Spring is approaching, the question is when is the best time to cut down my Zoysia?

This year we are going to advise on a different approach to cutting down your Zoysia and the irrigation practices after this event. Over the past year we have continued to tweak our nutritional program for our Zoysia turf. This has and was done to get us away from the annual labor intensive service. Many of us do not have to cut our Zoysia turf down this year; a buzz cut is about all we need at 1 to 1½". We will be communicating with you as to when you would need to cut down your Zoysia.

March temperatures are expected to be average or below for the first three weeks; for turf cutting we need temperatures closer to the 70's overnight for the turf to really start growing. The best time to cut down would be to wait until late March. If you choose to cut down earlier, only do a buzz cut on the Zoysia; as recovery will be very slow. Since this cut down is considered a renovation, your irrigation practices should change as well. We need a frequency of 3 times weekly; this will help the grass grow in a timelier manner.

March is our granular fertilizer Spring feeding. We would prefer to fertilize after the cut down or "Buzz Cut" is accomplished. We will do our best to communicate with all of our Zoysia customers prior to doing your granular fertilizer application. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact our office or schedule a consultation for your specific needs.

### **St. Augustine Turf**

With the expectation of fungus and some weeds our St Augustine has had a good performance the last two months, so as we go into Spring all should be as expected. Good green color, good density and minimal weed issues.

EMAIL THE EDITOR ~ Do you have a question or comment you would like addressed in an upcoming newsletter?  
qualityfirst@qfls.co - Editor - Michele Criddle

**407-737-1889 • We Care!**



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**MARCH 8th, 2015**  
**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**  
**Time To Resume**  
**Twice - A - Week Watering**

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**Tips With Tom ~ Termites**

[qualityfirsthomeservices.com](http://qualityfirsthomeservices.com)

**THE MOST INSIDIOUS THREAT YOUR HOME MAY FACE.....TERMITES!**

No matter how your home is constructed, where it's located or how old it is, it could be attacked by subterranean termites. They are a threat across 70% of world and in every part of the United States, except Alaska. They cause \$5 Billion Dollars' worth of damage each year in the U.S., with Florida accounting for half of that; causing damage that can go undetected while it grows for years on end. It's their ability to so masterfully while avoiding detection that makes termites so insidiously destructive.

Subterranean termites are the type of termite most likely to attack you home. All subterranean termites are social insects that nest in large, underground colonies. There can be millions of termites in a colony, but you may never see any evidence of them until a pest professional or you the homeowner discover they've seriously damaged your home.

America's #1 termite defense, TERMIDOR, is the best defense for you. There are a lot of termite control products available today; but determining which product is the best solution for protecting your home is as simple as learning why TERMIDOR termiticide/insecticide is the #1 termite defense product in the United States. TERMIDOR has consistently proven itself to be the fastest and most effective at protecting and eliminating termites in structures.

Remember, only a pest professional can keep your home termite free with TERMIDOR. With a pest professional and America's #1 termite defense working together to protect your home, termites will be the last thing on your mind.

