



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.

Did you know? Termite damage to your home is NOT covered by homeowner's insurance. Make sure you have an active retreat & repair guarantee!



## MESSAGE FROM HERE COMES SPRING

Jeff

It has been what I consider a very good winter, if you want to call it winter. To me having grown up in Minnesota our Florida winters feel more like an early fall. This year especially the warmer temperatures through November and December allowed our grass to grow and maintain a good color. It has been by far one of our best winters for turf. We have been able to enjoy a green lawn for a longer period of time than most years. The only real blemish for turf this season has been Brown Patch Fungus and Large Patch Fungus. Either way it took approximately 30 days to clear up these diseases when they took hold of a lawn.

Our landscapers have had a little more difficult season. Normally they go to an every other week cutting in November, this year they have continued to cut weekly through November and December so there has not been much of a break for them.

As we start to look ahead to the spring we will have many projects to plan. As always this Spring Newsletter issue has our recommendations to help plan for the "Spring Clean Up". This is a great time of the year with warm temperatures and the days getting longer. Very soon we will be setting our clocks ahead to get a little more time at the end of the day to enjoy the outdoors. We will be able to enjoy the rejuvenation of our plants. It is always a joy to see all the fresh new growth and the blooming season for many of our plants such as Azalea, Gardenia, and Magnolia to name a few.

Some not so enjoyable yet vital to plant health issues for this time of year is the leaf dropping many plants and trees go through along with the dreaded pollen season. This makes it a messy and difficult time of the year for those of us with allergies. Fortunately this all passes quickly.

There is one issue during leaf drop season that is a concern, our leaf blowers. Yes we want to keep the leaves cleaned up but it does come with an expense. Blowers pushing air at 140 plus mph can be damaging if we are trying to keep every leaf that falls off our property. The damage comes from dehydration of the plants and turf which will result in new growth damage, browning out, and even thinning. The constant blowing off can also shred plants **ESPECIALLY your Mondo Grass** and others such as Bromeliads, Cast Iron, Philodendron, Tricolor Ginger, Ferns in general, and the other tender plants. So please discuss with your landscapers that there are other options for leaf cleanup such as vacuums and or raking. Make sure if raking they use the flexible plastic headed rake to reduce damage and do not pull too hard on your St Augustine as you may pull it out of the ground.

We have made a few updates to our Zoysia cut down procedures. Please review this information and if you have any questions please contact our office for further consultation.

## 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 overgrown and we are 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 back. See page 2 for plants that may need some spring clean up.

(Cont. on page 2)

## SPRING TRIMMING (Cont. from page 1)

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

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

### **Plants that may need to be cut back due to being overgrown for their location or they just look messy or unkempt...again, in no particular order:**

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

**Ground Covers:** Jasmine

### **Plants that may need to be cut back...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), Marynell, Oak Leaf, Luster Leaf Holly, Eggleston Holly or larger Camelias, It is the time of year to get this done. The aggressive trimming now will reduce the trimming needed through the year. When they are cut back now you will be able to do more selective trimming with hand shears. 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 adds 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 still our number one concern. Hollies, Boxwoods and Podocarpus have all shown a better look without all the trimming.

## MOWING TIPS

Some customers are adding Zoysia to the front lawns and keeping St Augustine grass in the back. We have been running into many lawns set up this way that are not getting the proper mowing for the Zoysia. When Zoysia is cut too long you will begin to see clumps of tall grass. There will be areas that lay tight to the ground as well. The lawn begins to look like field grass. After spending all that money on Zoysia don't allow a simple thing like proper mowing stand in the way of the manicured almost carpet like look that Zoysia is designed to have. Talk to your landscaper and let them know you expect them to mow your St Augustine at 3.5 to 4.5 inches and your

Zoysia at 1.5 to 2 inches. They need to adjust their mower properly, when switching from 1 grass to the other, to get this done. Most all the landscapers already dealing with this issue have added a smaller mower to their fleet to properly maintain the Zoysia. The big riding deck mowers most landscapers use, will cause scalping when they lower the blades for Zoysia. Sooner or later if they have not equipped themselves with a smaller mower for Zoysia they will have to, as Zoysia front and St Augustine back is becoming a more common landscape practice. For those with Zoysia grass only the landscaper should already be using a smaller mower. If your landscaper will not set up to properly mow the 2 turfs types they may not be the landscaper you want on your property.

## MINUTE WITH *Mike*

### **We are updating our office systems!!!**

In an effort to be better equipped and to have the tools to take advantage of all the electronic communication sources available in the world today we have made the decision to upgrade our customer service system. I am sure most of you have been down the road of a new operating system, phone, computer brand or some other major change like this. We certainly are doing our very best to make this a smooth transition and as seamless to you "our customers" as possible. If all goes as planned the change will occur at the beginning or the end of March.

Some of the things we will be able to add to your service;

- Emailing alerts and recommendations during periods of severe weather.

- For those who like a call prior to service we hope to be able to add texting the information at your request.
- Easier and faster exchange of information such as billing.
- On our end we will be able to accumulate better notes and communications about your property for your technician.

While these are just a few of the big things we will be able to change we expect to have many less notable changes that still improve our ability to provide you with service.

While we are trying to meet the demands of the electronic age there is one thing you can always count on. We are still only a phone call away.



## CREPE MYRTLE

### 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 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.

## ZIKA VIRUS

It seems as we near mosquito season this would be a good year to use every protection method available. Zika Virus is carried by the mosquito *Aedes Aegypti* which is a common mosquito in Florida. Protective measures recommended at this time are repellants and clothing to cover the skin. A greater focus on population reduction is being planned by most municipalities for public areas. Common symptoms are joint pain, fever, rash, and red eyes. Cases have been reported in 7 counties across southern and central Florida.

Our mosquito program does work at reducing populations on your property but please be sure to include personal protection products when you go outside.

You can learn more by searching the internet.

## TIME CHANGE

Sunday March 13th is the day your clocks will "spring ahead". This is also the time when most areas will be allowed to start adding additional water on your plants and turf. Be sure to allow the weather conditions to dictate as to the need for increased watering. March and April can be rainy months so it is best to determine the need of watering by watching the plants. If they are showing signs of wilt extra water will be needed.

**EMAIL THE EDITOR** ~ Do you have a question or comment you would like addressed in an upcoming newsletter? Send them to the [editor@qualityfirst@qfls.co](mailto:editor@qualityfirst@qfls.co)

## ZOYSIA TURF



It has been a very good season for Zoysia grass. With the warmer temperatures and lack of frost we did not have to endure a brown lawn for several months, which has made this a very satisfying season. Now that spring is just around the corner it is time to discuss and plan our Zoysia turf cut down.

### ZOYSIA GRASS CUT DOWN

Every spring we discuss cutting our Zoysia by doing a "Cut Down" or "Buzz Cut". A cut down is the process of cutting the grass extremely low. You will remove most all that is green and some of the decaying material from last year's growth and the natural winter decline. In the past years we have worked to fine tune our service programs to avoid this labor intensive and messy project. Most lawns will only need what is called a buzz cut. This is a tight cut with a goal of 1 to 1.5 inches. The primary reason for this is to reduce thatch buildup. This also shortens the grass to allow for a seasonal growth spurt that will affect the appearance of the lawn all year.

Many of you will not be required to do a cut down or buzz cut but for those that do we have some changes in your watering program that should help to expedite the "grow in" of your Zoysia.

For those lawns that need a buzz cut or a complete cut down watering after the process should be done as though the lawn was a new install. Water every day for 10 minutes per zone. Practice this for 7 to 10 days or until you see green grass beginning to grow again. Then reduce the watering to 2 times per week. The cut down is extremely stressful and keeping the stems and runners moist during the recovery is critical. We have found in this situation a daily short watering is the best way to ward off additional damage.

This extra watering may generate more weed growth but we will work diligently to correct this as soon as the turf is strong enough to handle herbicides.

Temperatures will also play a key role in how quickly the lawn recovers. Zoysia grows extremely slow in cool weather. We recommend waiting to do your cut down or buzz cut until the overnight temperatures are averaging 70 degrees. The forecast is that March temperatures will be about average to slightly below average. You may want to plan your cut down for around mid-March.

When doing a cut down or a buzz cut we do recommend that you bag the grass that is removed. There will be a lot of material removed and leaving it on the ground will smother the grass resulting in excessive damage.

March is when we do the granular spring feeding. We would prefer to fertilize after the cut down or buzz cut is completed. We will do our best to communicate with all our Zoysia customers prior to doing your granular fertilization application. If you have any questions or concerns please call our office or if you rather we can schedule a consultation.

### St Augustine Turf

With the exception of some fungus and a few weeds our St. Augustine had a good winter. There was very little cool weather damage to most properties and with the spring granular fertilization we should see the grass take off and be what is expected. Good green color, good density, and minimal weed issues.



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PRSRST STD  
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ORLANDO, FL  
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**MARCH 13th, 2016**  
**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**  
**Time To Resume**  
**Twice - A - Week Watering**

**We Care**  
**407-737-1889**



R/O MIPS 407-657-7414 QF-NL01 02/16

**Termites!**

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**THE MOST DAMAGING 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; damage that can go undetected while it grows for years on end. It's their ability to avoid detection that makes termites so destructive.

Subterranean termites are the type of termite most likely to attack your 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.

