



DOES YOUR ZOYSIA LAWN LOOK LIKE THIS?

If so, you have a disease named Pythium Blight.

The common name is Root Rot because the root system is affected to the point that it stops moving nutrients and moisture through the plant. It is like having a lawn with no roots and because of this it has to take all its moisture through the leaf tissue. This is very much like when a new lawn is installed and requires lots of extra water. This disease typically affects our Zoysia grass in late June and into July. When identified we treat with the only product made to control this disease, fertilize, and start following up to insure control is accomplished. By this time of the year we usually have the grass completely grown back in. The problem this year is this disease did not show up until late August and into September. To make matters worse it stopped raining in September. Normally the afternoon rains in June and July dramatically improve the recovery because the foliage is kept hydrated during the hottest part of the day.



One thing that you can do to help resolve this problem is to set up a B Program on your irrigation controller. Setting up only the zone that waters the affected area for 10 to 15 minutes each day between 3 and 5 in the afternoon. Keep in mind that the disease came about from the soil in the root zone staying saturated for too long. So, running the irrigation on the whole property creates a situation where you could end up with the disease in other areas of the lawn. Once the grass begins to recover and green back up start cutting the B program back. Maybe run it every other day and then every 3rd day and finally stop the extra water.

This will be a very challenging time of year to push the lawn back to full health and to make matters worse we begin Brown Patch Fungus season in November. The biggest driver of disease in turf such as Pythium and Brown Patch is the soil is staying saturated too long. All plants need the soil to dry out a little before water is added again. We cannot control mother nature but we can control our irrigation system.

Please be sure to review the irrigation recommendations in this newsletter.

Also be assured that if you have a Pythium Blight issue, we have treated it properly, insured the roots are healing and simply need time for everything to start growing again. It is also important to understand the if addressed properly these diseases seldom kill the grass.



Very often we are told, "That spot gets Brown Patch fungus every year. Why can't you prevent it from showing up"?

Here is the answer. The chemicals we have available to us last for only a few days to a few weeks depending on the product used. Rest assured we use the products that last for a few weeks which most companies do not use, due to the extremely high cost. What prevents us from being proactive is that we never know when the disease will start. Also, we cannot over apply these products because the disease could become resistant making it impossible to control. We have to wait until we see symptoms before we can treat.





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REMINDER

Daylight Savings Time! Time To Resume Once - A - Week Watering

We Care
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FREEZE WARNINGS

A few good cold nights through the winter really do more good than harm. We even need a couple of freezes in our temperate zone for the plant material considered best for our climate to thrive.

DO NOT RUN YOUR IRRIGATION IF A FREEZE IS PREDICTED!

You should even make sure the irrigation system is off so it does not do an auto-run.

Some will say it is good to run the irrigation on a night when a freeze is being called for, to warm the soil or insulate the plants. The only place this is actually recommended is in orchards or nurseries. These people sit up all night and monitor the temperature along with everything else that contributes to a freeze. Based on knowledge, experience, and weather reports they will run the irrigation at just the right time to protect the plants and not allowing the water to freeze. However, even these folks can make a bad call as the weather can change quickly. On the other side if the irrigation runs and the water freezes on the turf or plant material there will be extensive damage that far exceeds not running the irrigation at all.

The best thing you can do when it is likely to freeze is to cover sensitive plants (make sure the cover does not contact the plants) and then let Mother Nature run her course. Make sure you take the covers off the plants the next morning or the plants might get baked as temperatures warm back up.

You are always welcome to contact us if you have questions concerning protecting your plants from a freeze.

EMAIL THE EDITOR

Do you have a question or comment you would like addressed in an upcoming newsletter?
Send them to the editor at: Lynn@QualityFirstCares.com

Some of the information in our newsletter may be repetitive throughout the year.
As things change from season to season and year to year we come across these issues as they repeat themselves.
With respect to all our long term customers it is good to refresh our memories from season to season but also to let all of our new customers in on the information.

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VOICE OF QUALITY

NEWSLETTER - WINTER 2019



A MESSAGE FROM *Jeff*

Summer has come and gone! What a summer we had and I am personally glad it is over. This has been one of our most challenging summers that I can remember. The excessive heat was unbearable at times and our grass certainly suffered because of this.

We had approximately 30 days of 95 degree plus temperatures with a heat index of 105 to 110 degrees. In the prior 2 years we have had a total of 4 such days. The damage that was done to turf was wide spread and created a lot of challenges for our technicians. Irrigation systems were working overtime in an attempt to stem the affects of this heat stress.

Applying additional fertilizer to generate regrowth helped us considerably, when the rainy season finally started and most damaged areas grew back in completely. This was good for everyone except all that extra fertilizer created a secondary problem called weeds! I do not recall a year when weeds seemed to be invincible. It has been very challenging and incredibly frustrating for our technicians to work so hard to resolve these issues as timely as we can without causing turf injury. In many cases our applications worked as they should yet at times it was as though we did nothing at all. Rest assured as we move into Fall, we will regain control of our weed situations and work diligently to maintain as much of a weed free environment as we can. One weed that is becoming more untreatable is Signal Grass / Alexander Grass. This is a glossy dark green crabgrass type weed and almost impossible to control. If you have this weed in your grass it is a situation that will require killing it off with round-up and installing new sod if the areas are large. This is the best time of year to get a project like this started, as the Fall allows better conditions for new turf to get established before next year's rainy season.

As we look to Fall and the upcoming cooler weather we can look forward to the holidays and also getting outside to enjoy our landscape. It is also a great time of year to get out and get caught up on our landscape chores. The summer rains are a blessing and a curse. Over grown shrubs can be cut back (not too far) and you can get caught up on the vines and weeds in the beds. Mulching, adding or replacing shrubs, adding color for the season, it is an enjoyable time of the year to be a gardener. Happy Gardening!





ZOYSIA

This can become a challenging time of the year for Zoysia. Our major concern is Brown Patch Fungus. Prevention is the best approach as Zoysia is slower to recover from disease issues. Also cooler temperatures and excess moisture may result in the Zoysia not having good color. An alternative to retain color in Zoysia is lawn paint. This is truly a beneficial application. Color will hold for 30 to 45 days depending on the growth of the turf. This is also a good time of the year for Zoysia as maintenance issues really slow down but it is still important to maintain an every other week cutting for aesthetics. Edging and weed eating become almost unnecessary but you should still edge one time per month, just to keep the edges sharp and crisp.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME WATERING

This is the time of year we are all told to set the irrigation down to 1 time weekly by our municipalities and water conservation groups. Some landscapers, lawn companies, and even irrigation companies will often say the same thing. It is the easiest way out. This always creates issues.

Depending on temperatures, plant material, and conditions at your property this may not be frequent enough. All properties are different and you may know your property better than anyone so reduce to what you feel comfortable with. We have outlined a somewhat effective irrigation program for our seasonal situations. This plan is outside of water restrictions, so it is up to you on setting your frequency. Supplementing as needed especially under particular conditions will be necessary, especially around large Oak trees as there is a lot of moisture competition. It is also a lot more work keeping up with our containerized plants. Drip irrigation works great to help keep up with this issue.

Watering regimen for November through March as a standard rule of thumb.

November – every 4th or 5th day to 1 x per week	December – every 5th day to 1 x per week
January – 1 x per week	February – 1 x per week
March – begin 2 times per week	

These frequencies are dependent on daily temperatures. The cooler the season the less frequently water is required. As always if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call for more information and a more specific guide to water your individual property.



IRRIGATION

During the rainy summer months, it is important to maintain our irrigation systems, so when it stops raining the system will function properly. It is during the rainy season that many folks shut the irrigation off to save money and also save on this precious resource. It is when we shut it off for an extended period of time that issues can and will develop. Plants grow to the point that they are blocking irrigation heads, heads do not pop up out of the grass because the grass has grown over the top of them, heads do not want to go back down, heads get broken from maintenance or possible from playing in the yard. These are issues seen routinely by our irrigation technicians and also by your lawn technicians as they service your property. Please take the time to visually inspect your system at least 1 time per month to ensure all is functioning properly. On a side note the new wireless rain sensors work fantastic. They shut the system down when you get rain and they allow the system to work when the rain stops. The biggest advantage is a rain sensor does not forget until issues arise to turn the system back on.



SNAILS ARE EVERYWHERE

While snails are everywhere their population seems to have exploded to the point, we have considered them a new foe that is attacking our landscapes and, in some cases, have devastated plants. Snails hide and are hard to find, but their damage can be very noticeable if you look. Ground cover Jasmine can be stripped of foliage, Boxwood can be another plant in which they strip bark from the stems causing dieback.

Many annuals and perennials are affected, Stromantha Tropical Gardenia, Pin Wheel Jasmine, Bromeliads, Orchids, Hostus Hamelia are a few other plants that have been damaged. Snails can be controlled, but control measures come in the form of baits. Baiting early in the A.M. or after the rain is over for the day is our best time to bait. Once most baits get wet from irrigation or rainfall, they dissolve making them no longer effective. Any slug and snail bait should work when applied liberally around the feeding site. Expand treatment area if ground cover plants are nearby as these are ideal harborage sites. When resting the snails need to get out of the heat and into a dark, moist environment. One application should be sufficient, but monitor for additional feeding. A day or 2 after treating you should notice small shells on the ground in the area treated.



Re-infestation can recur especially if you are adding new landscape or bringing home potted plants such as annuals or perennials to add seasonal color.

FLOWERING PLANTS

In this article we are going to talk about Flowering Plants. Fall, which is finally here, is the best time to enjoy our blooming plants. With the weather change bringing cooler nights and warm days “not too hot.”

We see a dramatic change in our landscape plants. Gardenia's budding and blooming. These also have a lot of leaf drop this time of year or yellowing foliage. Be prepared for Camellias which are so prolific and showy. These are my favorite plants, to watch change. It is not uncommon for a plant to not bloom along with the rest. It could be the soil, its age, the way it was pruned and when, it gets just a little more or less sun. We always apply the proper nutrients to your plants based on the plant. These environmental conditions are not so controllable. So if you have that one plant that just does not bloom, do a comparison with the others and you might think of an event or cause that can be corrected. By the way, sometimes Mother Nature is just having an effect.

There are numerous other blooming plants; Roses, Bougainvillea, Mandevilla, Bromeliads, Susanqua Camelia, Crown of Thorns, Hamelia-Colusa (Humming Bird Bush), Tea Olive, Beautyberry, Hibiscus, Fashion, Vivid, and Duc de Rohan Azaleas, Oleander, Tibouchina, Thryallis, Jatropa, Downy and Angelwing Jasmine, Asian Snow, Buttercup, Poinsettia, and Christmas Cactus, Plumbago. And Crotons with their many varieties are always colorful. Even some of the trees are blooming like Silk Floss, Cassia, and Bottle Brush.

We strive throughout the year to keep all your plants healthier, pest, and disease free. Applying our custom granular fertilizer 2x a year and our shrub spray throughout the season. It is also important to understand that some buds and blooms are very sensitive to sprays. During this season we pay close attention to this and if a plant has a problem we will carefully determine if it is serious or if it can wait until the blooming season is over. If we do see a problem we will let you know we are aware and what the best option is to keep the plant healthy. Enjoy your blooming plants throughout Fall and The Holiday season.



LEAF DROP SEASON

This is the beginning of leaf drop season. As a reminder leaf blowers do cause a lot of damage to tender plant tissue. The air pushed from the average blower can exceed 140 mph. It is ok to have some leaves on the ground in your shrub beds. The blower shreds and desiccates leaf tissue severely affecting the aesthetics of your plants. Please talk with your landscaper so they take the time to watch what and where they are blowing. Blowers are usually the suspect if your mulch disappears during the year. Look under and behind your plants, it is probably piled up against the plant trunk and walls of your home. These piles should be cleaned and leveled back out as too much leaf litter can affect nutritional and fungicide treatments and also may block moisture from reaching the ground in the root zone.



ST AUGUSTINE

This time of the year your St Augustine should begin to slow down foliage growth and color should improve. Cooler temperatures really make a difference for the color of the grass. Irrigation will play a key role in overall appearance, disease control, and weed control. Many landscapers will reduce to cutting turf every other week. Do not allow them to cut your grass shorter as this is a common industry practice. This is scalping and it is extremely stressful. With the shorter days meaning less sunlight available the turf needs the foliage so it does not thin out. As importantly a “tight cut” also cuts out all your color, when it should be at its best.

