



QUALITY FIRST
Home Services
"We Care"



Owned & Operated by
Jeff & Debra Melmer

VOICE OF QUALITY

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER - 2020 - 2nd Edition

A MESSAGE FROM JEFF MELMER

It has been an eventful summer to this point, to say the least. With Covid-19 rampaging its way through our state, we are all left to wonder when this will end. Or will it? At this time, we consider our organization Quality First, extremely fortunate to have no reported cases of Covid. We hope this will continue as we do our best to social distance, wear masks in public where required and just staying safe outside of the work place. I hope and pray that all of our customers, whom we consider family and friends of Quality First are all safe and healthy as well.

These are very trying times with the political scene we are in, the social injustice issues plaguing our great country, adding in Covid, and oh by the way it is hurricane season and they appear to be lining up in the Atlantic. So many questions about our future! The political non-partisanship of our government is troubled and divided! Who really is to blame? Should we open schools? How much does distance learning impact our lives and our children's lives now and into our/

their future? When will it be safe to go back to more normal activities? Is it when we have a vaccine, or will Covid weaken and become more like the common flu we experience? Some say they will not get vaccinated. I know I will!

I used to not get the flue shot, and I would get the flue every year. I started getting my flue vaccination about 4-5 years ago and have not had the flue since. Its great not feeling miserable with the flue!

With the social unrest in many of our major cities, I am concerned. Who is right? Who is wrong? I do not believe in the riots that are destroying communities, defacing public property, destroying small businesses and peoples lives and futures. I believe in peaceful protest; this is in our constitution. This is what makes America great! The freedom we have and have enjoyed for decades, because of the sacrifices that great Americans have made throughout the existence of the United States of America.

We all have our opinions and should not be chastised for our right to have that opinion. I do not believe in the "cancel" culture! On social media we seemingly have become the judge and jury, with no right or ability to defend ourselves. That is what our judicial system was set up for, for everyone to be heard and judged by our peers. I do not believe that social media is good for our future, I believe social media (Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Tiktok and so on) are a big part of our troubles today and in the future. We can see censorship already eroding away at our country's morals. I tell everyone that I can, that I believe social media will destroy our great country. I like the ability to form my own opinion and make my own decisions on what is right and wrong. As well as who I should or should not vote for who or what I want to believe in. I should have this ability without the "Mob" destroying me, my family, or my business.

I hope in writing this article that I have not offended anyone. If so, I apologize! I believe in America and what makes America great is its people. No matter what ethnic group, religion, or creed you belong to or believe in, it is great Americans such as yourself and I that are what makes America great. I wish all of our politicians thought the same way.

My last statement is I just want my college football back! I am a Gator through and through but I also love ALL college sports. It is the last great institution of playing for the love of the game! And lastly, I truly miss the Little League World Series.

Jeff Melmer

UNDERSTANDING CALIBRATION

There are many questions regarding irrigation. Irrigation frequency? What time is best to water? Should I water in the middle of the day? Won't that burn the grass? Does it evaporate?

We often hear: "we get tons of rain", "it could not be water with all the rain", "my irrigation guy said it is getting plenty of water it must be bugs or disease". These are all legitimate statements, but are they correct? In some cases yes, but how much water is a ton of rain? Your technicians, our office staff, and I communicate as much as we can about monitoring rain fall. A simple rain gauge is all you need so you know exactly how much rain you received at your property. $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch is only good for one day in the summer.

Please understand that we all receive varying amounts of rain on a daily basis. The rain gauge is a valuable tool in understanding water, water needs, and water requirements to sustain a healthy landscape and in many cases saving us money on our water bill.

Irrigation Calibration is an effective tool in understanding why a certain area of our landscape, especially turf, struggle at times. Just by merely turning your irrigation on and watching it, does not mean you are getting good water and irrigation is not the issue. This is a common statement but until you calibrate you can only guess that it is adequate.

A good example of how calibration tells the truth, follows. The whole front lawn was getting coverage by sprinkler heads, but there was a bad spot in the lawn. We put cups throughout that zone, including in the center of the bad spot and the adjacent good spots. We then ran the system for 15 minutes. The area in question was being watered by a head doing a 360 degree turn. It was putting out 75% less water than the rest. The rest of the zone had heads only doing 90 degree and 180 degree turns. To run the system long enough for the head doing a 360 would mean the rest of the zone would be flooded. The proper fix was to change the system so the 360 head was removed and replaced with heads that match the same coverage area as the rest.



RAIN SENSORS

Rain sensors sense moisture and will shut your clock down when functioning properly. Location, Location, Location, is the key to ensuring the sensor functions as intended. We receive directional rainfall frequently. If your sensor is near the clock, lower than an eave, under a tree, hanging upside down, or just old, it should be updated and properly placed. The newer wireless rain sensor sure makes it easy to properly place your rain sensor for optimum performance while not being an eye-sore on the side of the house.

ROUND UP

What you read below is the scientific truth about Round Up. Media and a few lawyers have turned this product into something it is not to create an opportunity to drive revenue. We certainly would not tell you what you should do or how you should react. We just wanted to give you what has been scientifically proven.

What most people do not know is how critical this product is to our farmers and environment. Most farmers do as much No-Till planting as they can. It helps prevent erosion issues like the great dust bowl. To do No-Till the ground has to be cleared of all the vegetation such as weeds and last years crop. At this point in time nothing is safer or as effective as the active ingredient in round up.

The following is from the trade magazine "CPCO", Certified Pest Control Operators. The data comes straight from the "EPA", Environmental Protection Agency.



ROUND UP (cont. from pg. 2)

EPA Announces Proposed Interim Decision on Glyphosate (Roundup)

By now everyone knows about the litigation and controversy surrounding the popular herbicide Glyphosate. We have all seen the TV commercials and the number of lawsuits against the manufacturer has grown to over 40,000. One of the things that has not been in the news is the fact that the EPA has been working on a “proposed interim decision” on Glyphosate for some time. That decision has been released and it will shake things up. EPA performed an independent evaluation of Glyphosate and found:

- 1) There are no risks to human health when Glyphosate is used according to the label.
- 2) There is no indication that children are more sensitive to Glyphosate than adults.
- 3) There is no evidence that Glyphosate causes cancer in humans. (Read again)
- 4) Glyphosate residues in food are safe if they are within the already established tolerances.

I'm sure that there will be literature and reports for the Manufacturer for you to distribute in the VERY near future.

MOWING ST. AUGUSTINE

This is the time of year that our St. Augustine grass can be put under a great deal of stress. Mowing height is critical for St. Augustine. At this time of year your grass is growing vertically, it is standing straight up. Your mowing height should be adjusted to compensate for this. Most St. Augustine grass should be cut at a minimum of 3½ inches during most of the year. However, this time of the year through October you should be mowing at 4 to 4½ inches. This ensures optimal appearance, health and color are maintained. Cutting to short puts a great deal of stress on your turf. It can weaken the plant, bugs sense stress (So do yourself a favor- raise your mowing height, talk to your landscaper and get them to raise their mower.)

With the excessive heat that we have been going through, scalping or cutting the lawn too short likely will result in the loss of turf rapidly. At this time of the year getting the turf to recover from any type of damage is difficult due to the growing season getting shorter.

Shaded St. Augustine benefits from a higher cut all year long so there will be more leaf blades to absorb light needed for photosynthesis, this will also aid in retaining turf density for this time of year.

Zoysia turf performs its best at 1 ½ inches tall. By this time of the year you are likely about that height. 2 to 2 ½ inches is the maximum height Zoysia should be mowed. Any taller begins to present color and appearance issues as the year wears on. Please discuss proper mowing with your landscaper so they continue at this level to insure your Zoysia can look its best for the remainder of the year. Keeping the cut low also reduces what has to be removed in the spring.

Zoysia also seems to be very sensitive to heat stress and can wilt very quickly. This does not require extra water, but does imply the importance of adequate irrigation coverage during our non-rainy periods. We do treat problem areas with nutritional supplements and the areas usually recover in a few days to a week or 2, depending on the severity of dehydration.



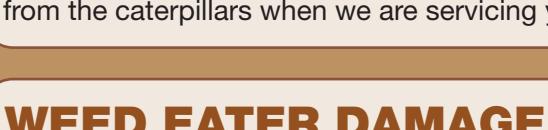
SOD WEB WORMS

This time of year we experience a pest called the Sod Web Worm. This insect has a complete life cycle (it goes through the same developmental stages as a butterfly.) You may also notice this time of year we are seeing a lot of butterflies. This is important to understand because in our area all the insects in the moth and butterfly families are pupating this time of year and developing into the adults you see fluttering around your property. All of these insects are very sensitive to heat and sun, moths being the most susceptible. This forces them to gather in shady areas of your lawn during the day. After dusk they fly away and do moth things. With all of this said, only a small number of the dingy brown moths that you see in your lawn are actually sod web worm moths. It also is impossible to eliminate the moths. Sprays will only kill the ones that are there at the time of the spray. As soon as the spray dries, moths from other areas will move in because the environment is favorable. (cool, shady, and moist) Having moths in your shrubs and lawn does not mean there are caterpillars currently damaging the lawn. (no moth or butterfly is capable of causing damage to your lawn or shrubs)



One extremely important thing to understand is there is a chemical that greatly reduces the possibility of damage from the caterpillars. It truly is a preventative treatment for sod web and army worms.

The product is systemic and absorbs into the grass' circulatory system. When the Sod Web Worm and Army Worm caterpillars hatch they are extremely small and must feed on the grass. While the level of pesticide is extremely low, the size of the caterpillar makes it extremely easy to kill. We treat every lawn with this product. It works and it last through the lawn damaging caterpillar season! To our knowledge no other company uses this product in our area because it is very expensive. We choose to use it so our customers do not get damage. Like many other extra or special things we do, our main objective is to take care of the customer. If you have ever replaced grass because it was mowed down and did not recover from Sod Web Worms you know exactly why this is so important. Nothing we do can stop a flying moth from getting where it wants to be. So you will see moths. But it is very unlikely that you will ever see damage from the caterpillars when we are servicing your property.



WEED EATER DAMAGE

In many landscapes there is no choice but to use a weed-eater to keep things looking sharp and clean. It is an awesome tool and does its job well. There really is only one major downfall to weed-eaters. There is no way to keep from cutting too much away. If the user is careful, that damage typically is not traumatic but too often, we see areas that get cut too short repeatedly resulting in very thin to even dead grass and lots of weeds.

The only part of grass that will efficiently take in sunlight for photosynthesis is the grass blade. If all that blade is removed weekly leaving only the runners and blade sheath very quickly the grass will thin and then die. Next come the weeds. I have always said if the soil is exposed something will grow.

The classic look of weed-eater damage is almost an exact same width path around shrub beds, the side of the home, and anything else where a mower will not fit. It will be nine inches or so wide and if you inspect closely there will be no grass blades left after the mowing has been completed.

So, what do we do?

There is not any other option to accomplish what a weed eater does. The only variable is the user. If the user will slow down and be a little more cautious the damage will not be as severe.

SHRUB CARE

There are always challenges when it comes to shrubs. They do tolerate a lot more stress than what our turf does. The rainy season can wreak havoc as too much water is not always a good thing. Some plants prefer wet soil, some prefer dry conditions. Matching the plants to the moisture conditions will lead to less maintenance and a healthier landscape.

We get a lot of questions on trimming shrubs. How much to cut, when is the right time and how to cut different plants? A lot is dependent on the shrub. This time of year with the issues of heat, major pruning can be very stressful and minor pruning can even cause problems for some plants. By this time of year any major pruning should be completed. We do not have that much growing season left for plants to fully recover. Good results from pruning are very dependent on the time of year. If you must do pruning this time of year, get it done as soon as possible and consult with us if in need of advice.

On the other hand many plants do need minor pruning, so that they are not so overgrown by late fall. Some plants that will perform better later this fall if trimmed this time of year in no particular order, Snow plant, Knock Out roses, Hawthorne, Trinettis, Crotons, Plumbago, Pinwheel Jasmine, Dwarf Azaleas, Poinsettia and Hydrangeas are just a few that can receive minor trimming. Even your Crepe Myrtle could use a little clean up to keep blooms going well into September. The following plants should not receive much if any pruning at this time of year; Formosa Azaleas, Viburnum, Ligustrum, and Jasmynes.

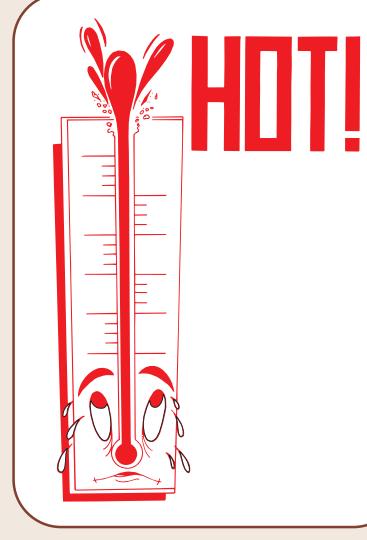


YOUR / OUR AREA TECHNICIANS

It is time to say Thank You!

Our Techs are unbelievable. They go out each and every day to provide you with the best service known in our industry today!

They brave the elements each and every day. Rain, Wind, cold (sometimes) and yes of course our oppressive heat. Not many people enjoy working outside or even being outside when temperatures reach 90° plus almost daily from June through the end of September. When temperatures reach 95° plus it becomes almost unbearable. With heat indexes reaching as high as 110°, ouch that is hot! The technicians go out and continue to do their job and a very good job at that. Yes, we miss things and make mistakes, it's inevitable. But when you look at the big picture the percent of mistakes are far and few in-between.



Sometimes you may feel they do not hear your concern or frustration. Trust me they do; it may just be the time of day. After 2:00 pm when the sun is most punishing, they start to become exhausted and overheated, but they still do their jobs and do it with a high level of competency.

So next time you see your technician please give them a pat on the back. They appreciate providing service for you as much as we appreciate you as a customer, and them as valued members of our team. What you never hear is how they boast with pride when someone praises them and their work in even the simplest way. They love what they do and take great pride in getting results.



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CHECK PAYMENTS AND ZELLE PAYMENTS

The majority of our clients are paying either by check or with Zelle. The overwhelming majority of such payments we receive are easily applied to client accounts. However, we are receiving some payments that do not have the Quality First account number in the memo line of the check or the memo section in the Zelle payment. It is important that you notate your account number on your payment to insure that our Accounts Receivable team is able to accurately apply your payment to your account. You can find your account number on your invoice in the section that says "account". If you have any questions/concerns, please feel free to give us a call. Thank you.

BACK TO SCHOOL,

When you are out buying all those new school clothes a good tip to make sure they are pest free, is to wash and dry or at least run the clothes through the dryer on high heat for about 10 minutes. Bed bugs, bed bug eggs, clothes moths, and most all other pests that might hitch-hike on the new clothing can be destroyed with about 10 minutes at 125 degree heat greatly reducing the possibility of an infestation in your home.



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