



Status/Newsletter – September 2008

Weather Information:

The Monsoon is here and that means high humidity, strong winds, spotty and sometimes heavy rainfall. Remember that in high winds dust, as well, as rain, can be a contributing factor in automobile accidents, so please slow down.

Monthly averages for the Phoenix Metro Area:

Sept.	Highs- 97°	Low- 67°	Mean- 82°	Avg. Precip.- .82 in.	Rec. High- 106°	Rec. Low- 51°
-------	---------------	-------------	--------------	--------------------------	--------------------	------------------

Turf Issues:

We are currently in the process of cutting back on the turf irrigation. You will notice, over the next few weeks, the turf will begin to brown out. This is normal and is in preparation for scalping.

The current average shallow soil temperatures on you property are

- NAOS - 87 degrees
- Turf - 78 degrees

Homeowner Tip, Over-seeding:

Over-seeding in the Fall in Arizona is a bit more complicated than scalping the Bermuda and the tossing on some rye grass seed but, not to worry, I will try and explain as much as possible all of the ins and outs of this process.

Seed:

The first things to consider are the various cultivars of grass seed available.

DO NOT use annual rye. It is an ugly yellow green grass with large fast growing leaves.

While the predominant seed used in Arizona is rye, one must consider which variety of rye to use, as well as, other options under various circumstances, such as shady areas.

Always use a blend of two or more perennial rye varieties in sunny areas. Using a blend lessens the possibility that a disease will kill all of the turf should one occur. Also this gives you various strengths to offset each variety's weaknesses. I prefer a blend of dwarf turf type rye grasses, which grow shorter than typical rye.

In the shade you should add to your rye blend a few of the following:

Poa Trivialis	bluegrass
Poa Supina	bluegrass
Creeping Red	fescue
Sheep's	fescue
Hard	fescue

Preparation:

Around the first of September, you should begin cutting back on your irrigation to the turf. Reduce your watering days to once a week and allow the Bermuda to begin going dormant.

This will reduce the overall stress to the Bermuda grass and significantly cut down on the amount of debris produced during scalping.

Anticipate scalping/seeding around the first of October, weather depending. You should wait until nighttime temperatures are consistently in the 70's.

A few days before scalping, flag the locations of all of your sprinkler heads and verify their correct operation.

Scalping:

Mow the turf down to your mowers lowest setting. Remove as much debris as possible. Trim along all obstructions and edges to the dirt.

Seeding Rates:

When combining cultivars, you should account for the total amount of seed in the combination.

Example: 50% Rye with 50% Fescue – for a total 10 lbs. /100 sq ft of seed or...

Example: 90% Rye with 10% Bluegrass – Rye 6 lbs/1000 sq ft and Bluegrass ½ lbs/1000 sq ft for a total of 6.5 pounds of seed.

Just Rye – Apply 10 pounds of seed per 1000 Sq. Ft. of turf area.

Just Fescue – Apply 10 pounds of seed per 1000 Sq. Ft. of turf area.

Just Bluegrass – Apply 1.0 pound of seed per 1000 Sq. Ft. of turf area.

Incorporate the seed into the soil by either raking manually or by using a vertislice machine.

Watering:

Pop-up heads, set for 4 minutes per cycle.

Center rotary heads, set for 16 minutes per cycle.

Edge rotary heads, set for 8 minutes per cycle.

The above times are averages; your times may differ based on flow and pressure. Gauge your output on each type of head by placing a jar or bowl $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance of throw and recording the amount of water applied in a given period of time. Ideally you want about $\frac{1}{8}$ in of water applied each cycle.

Set your irrigation clock to water 6 times per day, every day of the week. You may have to use more than one program. Start times should be as follows:

- 1 - 8:00 AM
- 2 - 11:00 AM
- 3 - 2:00 PM
- 4 - 5:00 PM
- 5 - 8:00 PM
- 6 - 11:00 PM

Two weeks after significant germination takes place, add time to the cycles and use fewer start times. Continue to adjust the cycles and start times until you have achieved a schedule of 1 watering per day, 3 days per week with approximately 1 inch of water being applied per watering.

Once the winter rains begin and if the temperatures are especially cool, you may only have to water once per week to maintain the turf.

If you reduce the watering schedule and wonder if there is enough water being applied to the turf... Look for a bluish discoloration, which will indicate the turf needs water, and increase the watering days.

Your remaining start time should be approximately set for 3:00 AM.

Mowing:

Mow the first time to 2 inches when the new turf has reached a general height of 3 inches.

Keep your blades sharp and if you desire a lower mow height, slowly lower the mow height by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch each week until you reach the height you want.

Do not mow winter turf grass below 1 inch.

Fertilization:

Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer (21-7-14) immediately after your first mowing. These fertilizers are typically an ammonium nitrate product.

When daytime temperatures are consistently below 65 degrees, you must fertilize with a calcium nitrate product typically (15-0-0).

Ammonium nitrate products do not degrade properly in cool temperatures.

Amendments:

Each situation is different and whether or not you will need to add gypsum, sulfur or other soil amendments can only be determined after a comprehensive soil test.

You may get instructions for collecting samples and where to take them for testing from your local agricultural extension office.

If you have had difficulties in the past with seeding, it would be a good idea to test the soil.

pH, salt and many other factors inhibit growth and nutrient uptake.

Questions:

Please call...

Dave O'Laighin (Oh-Lyon) at Lawn and Order of Arizona, 480-226-3702