

FALL & WINTER LAWN CARE

1. Moss Control: Apply now in the fall to keep moss to a minimum and to get a head start for spring. Use **Bonide's 'Moss Max'** (Iron granules for drop or broadcast spreader) but keep it off patios, walkways, plants, etc. – iron will stain! Use **'Natural Moss Max' from Bonide** (potassium soap), a liquid that will not stain hard surfaces. This liquid form also controls algae and lichens too and can be sprayed on deciduous plants, during dormant season only.

2. Weed Control: Get weeds taken care of in the fall for far less weeds in your lawn come spring. Use **'Weed Beater Ultra' from Bonide**, a great cool season weed control that works in temps down to 45 degrees. **'Sedge Ender' from Bonide** works to control some tougher weeds and some annual grasses as well. **Captain Jack's Lawnweed Brew from Bonide (formerly Weed Beater FE)** is a natural lawn weed killer (Iron based) AND does moss/lichens/algae as well. Brush killer (**BK-32 from Bonide**) will not harm turf, but will get some of the super tough weeds, like horsetail and buttercup. Be sure to watch in spring and re-apply to get any that try to come back!

3. Thatching/Aerating: Thatch if necessary to remove build up coming out of summer – it will remove all weak and dead grass. Your thatch layer accumulates each season, especially if you do not bag clippings, and should be removed at least one a year to allow fresh healthy grass to grow and minimize thatch diseases over the wet winter months. Aerate to help compacted soil. Thatching and aerating are both useful this time of year with dormant lawns after a dry summer. Thatching rakes are out there, thatching blades for mowers as well. However, the best way is to rent a power thatcher or have a lawn service do it for you. You will be shocked how much junk comes out of a thatched lawn. Aeration would be by machine as well.

4. Topdress/Overseed: Top-dress with topsoil or a sand/compost mixture if filling plug holes from aerating, then use compost to cover seed if over-seeding. A bale of **EB Stone Organic Compost** will cover about 400 square feet of seed and a 1.5 cubic foot bag of **Top Coat from EB Stone** (or the same compost) will cover about 200 square feet. You just need 1/8" to 1/4" to cover the seed and be sure to keep it moist, but not flooded! **FOR SEED**, new lawns need about 5 to 6 pounds per thousand square feet. Just over seeding? Use 1 to 2 pounds per thousand square feet, depending on how bare ground is. Use a good local blend, like our **Shade and Sun** mixture – an excellent mixture of fescues and rye grasses for our PNW maritime climate.

5. Fertilizer: Use fall/winter, moss control, or organic type of fertilizers this time of year. The key is low nitrogen, especially this time of year – our grass needs a boost this fall! **'Nature's Green' from EB Stone** is the best lawn food around! Try to avoid the "weed and feed" or synthetic lawn foods, organic is much better for the environment and is totally kid/pet/wildlife safe. Try to go green and use only organic foods on your turf!

6. Lime: Use to help sweeten the soil in spring and fall - grass grows better in higher (alkaline) pH soils and moss does not. Simply put, this will help keep moss to a minimum and produce a stronger turf. **'Lightning Lime' from Espoma** is the best and will work the fastest as well. **Lime is NOT a moss killer** – you are raising your soil pH long term which will make turf areas more appealing to grass and less to moss. Keep up on it and it does help – do it fall and spring each season, and apply easily with a drop or broadcast spreader.

7. Diseases: Watch for thatch diseases and take care of them early before they take over. Red Thread is already out and about, with cooler evenings and dew. Use '**Revitalize**' **biofungicide (organic) from Bonide** or '**Infuse**' (**systemic granules chemical**) **from Bonide**, which can be applied with a spreader or broadcast onto problem areas. Natural Copper Fungicides, and even Neem Oil, are also useful options for controlling diseases. Applying a dose of fall organic fertilizer will also help it grow through disease too. This is one to get ahead of, for sure!

8. Crane Fly Larvae: Watch for adults laying eggs and for larvae damage. Think daddy longlegs spider meets a mosquito on steroids – you will see them skimming across the lawn surface in fall and then again in spring. Use **Bonide's 'Insect and Grub Control' or 'Eight'** granules. This is an extremely common issue in our area – be sure to be proactive and when in doubt, carefully dig up a small square and inspect root zone. You will see the grubs (tan or greyish) in the soil eating on your grass roots.

Starting over? Remember it is all about the soil and drainage. You need 6" to 8" of good soil to build on for lawns. Ask for tips on how to do it right if you are starting from scratch or rebuilding existing turf areas. Keep in mind that old sod needs to be removed for best results – old grass roots take forever to decompose and will impede new grass from taking hold.

Sod vs. Seed? It is ultimately up to you. Sod certainly is instant gratification to some extent, but seeding a new lawn is much less money and is easier.

Moles – Try to eliminate their food source, then try to repel, then attack with traps/gasser/poison when all else fails.

Remember to use products as directed! Using twice as much will not work twice as well!

Remember to go green if you can! There are great natural solutions to most problems! Help the environment and be people, pet and wildlife safe!