



## Turfgrass Calendar: Warm-season Zoysia

*Spring is the beginning of the growing season for warm-season lawns.*

### April

- Soil test an established lawn every three years to discover which nutrients it will need besides nitrogen. Test results indicating high to very high rates of phosphorus and potassium suggest amending only with nitrogen.
- Warm-season lawns prefer no fertilizer before the month of May. However, a slow-release, organic, corn-gluten based fertilizer can be applied in mid-April at the rate of 0.8-pound to 1.2-pounds nitrogen per 1000 square feet. This will serve as crabgrass preventer as well.

### May

- Core aerate or power rake the entire lawn some time during the growing season (May to August). This will loosen compacted soil, increase nutrient and water absorption and remove thatch.
- To prep the lawn for annual aeration, first rake up debris and mow short, bagging the clippings. If you have them, mark irrigation and cable lines.
- Just before aeration, spread compost and *Turface* on the entire lawn. Cores should be left on the surface to air dry and act as topdressing.
- From May 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, fertilize at the rate of 0.5-pound to 1-pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet with either a synthetic fertilizer (35-3-5 or 22-0-0), *Milorganite 5-2-0* or organic, granulated *Espoma Chicken Manure 3-2-3*.
- To prepare a new lawn: after aeration and fertilizing, install zoysia plugs 4-6 per square foot or lay sod. Do not use zoysia plugs or lay zoysia sod after August 1<sup>st</sup>. Water every day. Mow after 2 to 3 weeks or when you can't pull the plugs or sod up.
- A Zoysia lawn can also be started by seed after aeration. Do this before July 1<sup>st</sup> so there will be enough time for the lawn to establish. Use 1 to 2 pounds of seed per 1000 square feet on bare ground and apply a starter fertilizer (13-25-12). Water every day for 2 to 3 weeks.
- Don't spot-spray weeds too early in the season because you may damage the turfgrass.
- Add organic matter to the soil by using a mulching mower and leaving grass clippings on the lawn.

### June

- Zoysia loves to be mowed short. Mow at 1-2" and it will fill in densely, crowding out weeds.
- Keep a sharp blade to reduce disease susceptibility. Mow frequently to remove no more than one-third of the turf height at each mowing.
- If you did NOT apply synthetic fertilizer in May, do it now at rate of 0.5-pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet.
- If you are maintaining an organic lawn and did NOT fertilize in May, you may use a slow-release organic fertilizer in late June at the rate of 0.4-pound to 0.8-pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet .

## July

- You may opt for a second application of synthetic fertilizers at rate of 0.5-pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet.
- Skip this step for organic lawns.

## August

- Do not use zoysia plugs or lay zoysia sod after August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Time for another application of synthetic fertilizers at rate of 0.5-pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet.
- For organic lawns, apply fertilizer at the rate of 0.8-pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet in mid-August.
- Apply *Espoma Iron-Tone* in late August if you want a green lawn into the fall.

## September/October/November

- Mow leaves back into the lawn with mulching mower. Rake and compost them if they are abundant.
- If you want to use a winterizing fertilizer, wait until grass has lost most of its color and is not actively growing. This will help with hardening-off before the winter dormancy.

## December/January/February/March

- Zoysia lawns are dormant during this period. They won't green up until April.
- Avoid overuse of road salt which can damage lawns and nearby plants.
- Avoid foot traffic on frozen lawns.