

EARLY  
SPRING

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## DID YOU KNOW?

- If you're counting calories, you may want to avoid avocados. They have 167 calories for every 100 grams!
- Oak trees don't produce acorns until they're at least 50 years old.
- Ginger can be used to fight motion sickness.
- Orchid seeds are so tiny that it takes 1.25 million of them to weigh just one gram.
- Wheat is grown on every continent except Antarctica.
- Cucumbers consist of 96% water.
- If a tree has a notch in it, the notch will always stay the same distance from the ground – regardless of how tall the tree grows.
- Americans consume 11 billion bananas per year.
- The average ear of corn contains 800 kernels.



# We Haven't Seen the Last of Crabgrass

A TRUE REPEAT OFFENDER AMONG LAWN PESTS

Introduced to the United States as a potential forage crop in 1849, crabgrass has clearly outstayed its welcome. This annual plant is a member of the grass family, but it's just about the last grass you want to see in your lawn. Coarse-textured and yellowish-green in color, crabgrass is very noticeable in lawns and will grow rapidly if nothing is done to discourage it. Plus, it's very tolerant of both high temperatures and dry weather once it gets established.

### A SEEDY AFFAIR

Crabgrass plants are prolific breeders. A single plant is capable of producing thousands of seeds, and seed production can occur even when the plant is mowed down to just ½" in height. Talk about an aggressive weed!

The good news is that seed production can be hindered with the application of pre-emergent herbicides in late April or early May. By forming a barrier in the top inch of the soil, these preventative treatments make it difficult for crabgrass seeds to sprout. The only problem is, pre-emergents make it harder for grass seeds to sprout, too. So, if you're planning on seeding your lawn this spring,



*Coarse-textured crabgrass is very noticeable in lawns.*

you'll want to wait six to eight weeks after pre-emergents have been applied.

Also, keep in mind that yearly applications of pre-emergents are necessary for ongoing control. That's because crabgrass seeds are always present in your lawn, with new batches ready to germinate every spring.

### HEALTHY LAWNS ARE LESS SUSCEPTIBLE

For even better crabgrass control, it's important to make your lawn less conducive to grassy weed growth. You can do that by taking steps to make it thicker and healthier. Here's how:

- Mow high, removing no more than ⅓ of the grass blade at a time.
- Fertilize regularly to encourage lush, vigorous growth.
- Make sure your lawn gets from 1" to 1½" of water per week.

Combined with pre-emergent herbicides, the practices listed above can go a long way toward keeping crabgrass out of your lawn and out of your life this year.

#### KEY POINTS

- Crabgrass plants are prolific, aggressive weeds.
- Combining pre-emergent herbicides with proper mowing, fertilizing and watering provides the best control.



## STAYING A STEP AHEAD OF Fungus Disease

All lawns are susceptible to fungus diseases. The fungi that cause them are microscopic, thread-like organisms that move around via air- or water-borne spores. These spores are all around us, and they produce new infections whenever environmental factors such as temperature, moisture, light, nutrients and stress levels favor disease development.

Spring is an especially vulnerable time, since many fungus diseases are able to spread quickly in cool, moist weather. Not all fungus diseases are fatal, but they can definitely detract from your lawn's appearance while reducing its overall health.

Some of the more common fungus diseases seen in the spring include snow mold, slime mold, red thread and leaf spot. Symptoms can range from simple spots on grass blades to discolored patches of turf to completely dead areas. Fungicides can suppress these diseases, but for lasting control it's important to build a healthy lawn that's able to fight them off. This can be done with proper watering, mowing, fertilization and aeration practices.

If you do suspect that your lawn is suffering from fungus disease, you should have it inspected as soon as possible to determine an effective course of treatment.



*Discolored patches of turf are common symptoms of fungus disease.*

## What's Your Plan?

### THINK AHEAD FOR LANDSCAPING SUCCESS

When warm weather returns, property owners everywhere start thinking about making changes to their landscapes. If you're one of them, we can't over-emphasize the importance of developing a careful plan before getting started.

The temptation to rush into new plant installation can be very strong, but if you don't think ahead, you may end up dissatisfied down the road. As you develop your landscaping plan, you should ask yourself the following basic questions:

#### WHAT ARE MY NEEDS?

Keep in mind that a successful landscape is both practical and beautiful. So, rather than just picking out attractive plants, consider what purposes you want your new landscape to serve. Do you need an outdoor kitchen area? A play space for children? A vegetable garden? A private spot that blocks the neighboring property from view? Consult family members to ensure that everybody's needs are represented in your plan.

#### WHAT IS MY BUDGET?

If your cash flow is limited, it might make sense to tackle just one area at a time, completing your landscaping project over the space of several years as time and money allow. For example, you may want to focus on public and entrance areas this year, then address your outdoor living or entertainment area next year. Determining your specific needs and priorities upfront will help you decide where to start.

#### HOW MUCH SPACE DO I HAVE?

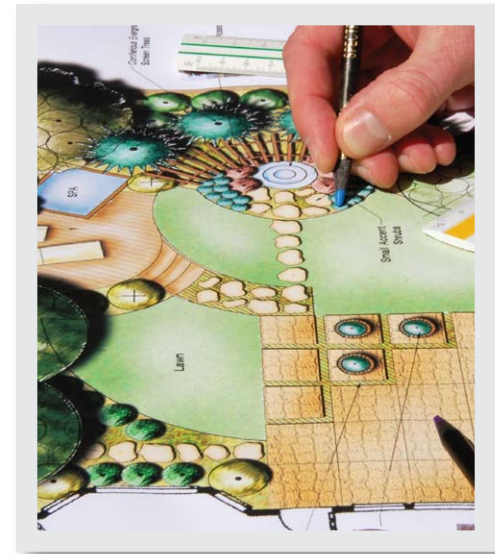
Be sure that each area has enough space for its intended purpose, and keep the mature size of a tree or shrub in mind when deciding where you want to plant it. Without enough room to grow, that gorgeous ornamental you have in mind could cause some major maintenance headaches in the future.

#### KEY POINTS

- Try not to rush into new landscaping projects.
- Remember that good landscapes are both practical and beautiful.

Of course, there's more to consider beyond these basic points, but a little forethought

in these areas will go a long way toward ensuring that you're happy with the end results. It's also a good idea to meet with a professional landscape architect who can help you develop a comprehensive plan that meets your specific needs and budget.



*Careful planning is essential for the long-term enjoyment of any new landscaping.*

## DOES YOUR PLAN YOU MAY WANT T

Synthetic decks are becoming more common as property owners look for environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional wood construction materials. Made from recycled plastic, vinyl, or a combination of recycled plastic and sawdust, these decks are very durable and don't warp or split like wood does.

You can choose from a variety of colors depending on your specific needs, and you can count on synthetic decks to last longer than their wooden counterparts. Plus, synthetic maintenance needs are minimal when compared to wood, with no sealing necessary. Simply hose the deck down periodically, and you'll be good to go!

# Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

As talk about global warming continues heating up, you may hear the term “carbon footprint” being used in conversations about the environment. If you’ve been wondering what that means, here’s a quick explanation.

It’s thought that carbon dioxide is the main “greenhouse gas” responsible for global warming. Your carbon footprint is basically a measure of how much carbon dioxide goes into the atmosphere as a result of your daily activities.

If you’d like to determine your carbon footprint, there are “carbon calculators” in abundance on the Internet. These calculators ask you questions about your lifestyle, then provide you with your personal carbon footprint in terms of tons of

carbon dioxide emitted per year.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Once you’ve calculated your carbon footprint, you might be interested in ways to reduce your annual carbon dioxide output. Here are a few simple suggestions:

- Use energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs in your home.
- Unplug electronic devices when they’re not in use. Items such as DVD players and stereos still draw power even when they’re turned off.
- Buy fruits and vegetables locally when you can (the ones you find at the super-market are usually transported on trucks that drive an average of 1,500 miles

from the field to the store, contributing a significant amount of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere).

- For shorter trips around town, consider walking or riding a bicycle rather than driving.
- Look into hybrid options the next time you purchase a car.

Reducing your greenhouse gas emissions is easier than you might think. By working together to lower our carbon dioxide output, we can have a positive impact on the state of our planet!

# Act Now to Stop Insect Damage

## DORMANT OIL IS A GREAT DEFENSE

All sorts of harmful insects overwinter in our landscapes, just waiting for warm weather to return so they can get to work damaging our valuable trees and shrubs. Some of the most common include:

**Scales** – These tiny, sucking insects use their threadlike mouth parts to puncture and suck sap from leaves and bark. Infested plants appear unhealthy, grow poorly, and the foliage may be small and chlorotic.

**Aphids** – These small, soft-bodied pests suck plant juices from various plant parts. Their feeding activity can lead to off-color foliage, twisted and curled leaves, poor plant growth, branch dieback and more.

**Spider mites** – These tiny pests may be red, green, orange, brown or black in color, and they suck plant juices from evergreen foliage. Since chlorophyll is destroyed through their feeding activity, foliage color usually changes to greenish-gray, then yellow, then brown.

**Thrips** – These small, narrow-bodied, sucking insects cause a distinct splotchy

appearance on leaves, and in some cases leaf drop can occur. They’re known to feed on woody stems as well as on foliage.

Dormant oils can stop insect pests like these, which may already be in your trees and shrubs in larva, egg or adult form, from causing damage or multiplying. The best time to apply dormant oils is when temperatures are above freezing but plants are still dormant. They work by coating and literally suffocating pests as they block the air holes through which the insects breathe.

Put a stop to insect damage before it starts this year. Consider a dormant oil application in the early spring!



Spider mites are just one of many overwintering insect pests that can be controlled with dormant oils.

## INCLUDE A DECK?

### GO SYNTHETIC



Synthetic decks are both functional and easy to maintain.



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## Quick Tips for Early Spring

- This is a great time for cutting back your ornamental grasses. Old growth can be tied back with twine, and the grass should be cut 4" to 6" from the ground to spur new growth.
- Fruit trees, evergreens and many (but not all) deciduous trees and shrubs will benefit from being trimmed and shaped now, before new growth begins.
- Any perennial plants that were left standing over the winter can be cut back now. This will encourage new growth and blooms.
- Your landscape's appearance can be greatly improved with a thorough edging and weeding of your plant beds.
- Any trees or shrubs that were planted in the fall will benefit from a long, slow watering once new leaves appear.



Trimming and shaping prior to new growth is beneficial.



*Spring feeding replenishes your lawn's nutrient reserves for strong spring growth.*

### Wake Up Your Lawn with a Spring Feeding

After a long winter's rest, your lawn can use some help getting back into the swing of things. One way to do that is to provide your turf with a balanced application of fertilizer. The nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in the fertilizer will promote strong color and top growth, stimulate root development, and increase disease resistance and water retention.

Applied in the right concentration (no more than one pound of nitrogen should be used per 1,000 square feet), a balanced fertilizer will replenish the nutrient reserves your lawn used up over the winter (or dormant) season. Plus, it will jump-start your lawn's growth phase this spring, helping it to green up and fill out before hot summer weather returns.

By promoting a thicker, healthier lawn with spring fertilization, you'll make your turf better able to fend off weeds, insects and disease throughout the growing season!