



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Organic Turf Care Dly Calendar

	Product Application	Cultural Practices
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProHealthy Turf® Organic Fertilizer / 50lb bag(s) 	Soil Test Clean Up.
MAY	Soil Amendments –according to soil test (Apply April – June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lime: / 50lb bag(s) CHARGE-S3: / 50lb bag(s) Humic+: / 50lb bag(s) Tri-Rye or Perennial Rye, Kentucky Blue, Fescue grass seed blend: / 50lb bags 	NO Aggressive raking - it can damage the grass, remove organic matter and bring weed seeds to the surface. 1 ST Mow – start low, 2-2.5” Lawn Repair: top dress/over seed or seed slice bare and thin areas. Water per instructions in cultural practices. Over seeding can occur until May 30th.
JUNE	June 15 th – June 30 th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProHealthy Turf® Organic Fertilizer / 50lb bag(s) Rye Grass for temporary fix. 	Gradually raise mowing height to 3.5” and return clippings. If you still have trouble spots top- dress & over-seed with annual rye grass for quick coverage – over seed again fall.
JULY	Optional: liquid application	Mow high – 3.5” return clippings
AUG	After August 15 th (delay if in drought) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProHealthy Turf® Organic Fertilizer / 50lb bag(s) Soil Amendments –according to soil test (Apply April – June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lime: / 50lb bag(s) CHARGE-S3: / 50lb bag(s) Humic+: / 50lb bag(s) Premium Grass Seed: / 50lb bag(s) 	After August 15 th (delay if in drought) Aerate & Over seed. Top dress trouble spots with ¼”- ½” loam/compost. Water per instructions Apply granular products after aerating if possible
SEPT	If needed treat w/Hb Nematodes or cedar oil for grub control.	Scout for grubs - more than 6 grubs per square foot should be treated. Aerating & over seeding can occur until Oct. 1st.
OCT	Soil Amendments can be applied up until ground freezes	Start lowering mowing height End of Season Site Assessment – note areas of improvement and need.
NOV		Clean Up & Final cut at 2.5”

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ORGANIC TURF CARE CULTURAL PRACTICES

Mowing

In an All Natural Organic Turf Care (OTC) program proper mowing heights can and do have a significant impact on the likely success of the program.

Higher mowing heights contribute to shading the soil which directly affects soil temperature and blocking sunlight to the soil surface. Both of these, cooler soil temperature and lack of sunlight discourage weed seed germination. With more surface area the turf grass is able to carry on greater levels of photosynthesis. Through increased levels of photosynthesis, a deeper, more vigorous root system is developed. Greater root mass enables the turf grass to be more wear resistance, drought tolerant, and endure greater stress.

Another benefit of a healthy root system is the addition of as much as 1/2 to 4 tons of organic matter per acre to the soil on an annual basis. Mowing heights should change over the course of the growing season starting at 2 1/2" in early spring – moving to 3" to 4" by June and ending the season in November at 2 1/2".

When mowing, cut no more than 1/3 of the grass blade at a time. Grass should ideally be maintained between 3 1/2 - 4". The following guide will help determine when your grass should be cut & how often.

Desired Height:	Cut When	Frequency:
2 1/2" (early spring and end of season)	3 3/4"	4 Days
3"	4 1/2"	5 Days
3 1/2"	5 1/4"	6 Days
4"	6"	7 Days

Grass Clippings

In an All Natural Turf Care program grass clippings should be returned. With a healthy ecosystem the return of clippings adds to the soil organic matter and serves as a natural fertilizer equal to one application per season. The healthy soil biology will breakdown the grass clippings.

Watering

Watering should be deep, infrequent and in the morning. Established grass should receive 3/4" – 1" of water a week through natural rain fall or irrigation. If irrigating this may mean that each zone is in operation for 50 minutes to an hour depending on flow rate. To test how much water is being delivered, use a small can and measure the water collected. During extreme heat the grass should be watered more frequently for shorter periods. Over watering can lead to soil compaction and disease.

Watering – Over-seeded areas: Water 2X a day for approximately 10 - 15 minutes, *mid morning & afternoon*, to ensure soil and seed stay moist – not wet. Maintain watering schedule until seed germinates, approximately two - three weeks. Once the seed germinates, cut back watering to once per day in the morning, then every other day, then twice per week as the root system gets establishes. Once germination is complete you need to water 1 inch weekly to maintain a healthy lawn. *Grass can take up to 18 months to become fully established.*

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Turf Density

A dense lawn is the best way to crowd out weeds. Grass like any crop must be regularly planted to ensure the highest yield (thickest lawn). Since grass is cut before it goes to seed it is necessary to periodically over-seed. In the spring we recommend seed slicing to avoid bringing weed seeds to the surface. Late summer/early fall is the best time to repair thin lawns by broadcast over seeding when aerating.

Grass Seed Recommendations:

TIMING/USE	SPECIES/MIX	Lbs/1000SF
Spring (April/May)	Blend of Perennial Rye (60%+), Fescue & bluegrass	4 – 6 lbs
Late Spring/Early Summer (June)	Perennial or Annual Ryegrass (temporary fix)	4 – 6 lbs
Fall (Aug 15 th – Oct. 1 st)	Blend of Perennial Ryegrass, Fescue & bluegrass	4 – 6 lbs

To patch bare areas: break up soil with iron rake, mix seed with loam/compost and cover area OR seed slice (soil to seed contact necessary). Seed should have germination rate of ≥ 90%.

More Seed is always better!

Weed Control

Weeds are opportunistic and generally indicate underlying soil conditions that do not favor the growth of turf grass. Areas of bare soil or low turf coverage encourage the germination of weeds. In the spring, seed slice thin lawns, or top dress and over seed bare areas using the seed blends recommended below. The use of perennial ryegrass, because of its short germination rate may be used to provide quick turf coverage in the late spring. Sod may be used in high traffic areas. Over seeding will be an ongoing activity as you work to bring soil chemistry/structure into balance.

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WHEN TO SCOUT – WEEDS & PESTS

In an All-Natural Organic Turf Care (OTC) program it is important to be aware of potential turf grass pests and when they are most likely to appear in order to best manage against them. In time under an OTC program concern over potential pest damage is minimized; attribute it to the ‘good’ guys keeping the ‘bad’ guys in check through building and developing healthier soils. However, one doesn’t generally get there simply overnight. If you are taking a true organic approach to the maintenance of your grass you do not have a quiver full of toxic chemicals to wage war against some pest. Timing and patience takes on even greater importance. Below is a list of pests that you may encounter and should a problem arise notify me.

Pest	When	Comments
Chickweed	Early – Late April <i>Winter Annual</i>	Like most forms of weed control in an organic lawn improving turf density is critical to controlling common chickweed. Once the sunny warm weather appears common chickweed is going to die off leaving bare ground for the next weed to appear. At this time of the season the best recommendation would be to seed slice those areas where there is chickweed as soon as possible. Because of chickweed’s poorly developed root system the act of seed slicing should take care of the existing root system.
Dandelion	Late April – Early May <i>Perennial</i>	Dandelions are generally an indicator of low calcium availability in the soil. Through my efforts to correct the calcium imbalance in my own lawn over the last six years I have seen number and health of my dandelions go down significantly. No longer am I able to grow those truly honker specimens. You know the ones I mean with their strong broad rosettes and multiple flowers. Now I get small weak rosettes with a single spindly flower.
Prostrate Knotweed	Early June – July <i>Summer Annual</i>	In turf grass, it is most often found on hard compacted soil or areas damaged in spring or summer by traffic or trampling, including paths and walkways and athletic fields. Prostrate knotweed is not particularly competitive; it usually survives in stressed areas where other species do not grow well or are damaged. So the key is to relieve the areas of compaction and get turf grass growing in its place.
Ground Ivy	Late Spring – Fall <i>Perennial</i>	Control of ground ivy or creeping Charlie is a very difficult without changing underlying soil conditions. Ground ivy is a member of the mint family that favors shaded, moist soils with low fertility. Efforts at control through flaming and solarization have been limited. Best control is to not allow it to get established, improve underlying soil conditions and mow high.
Crabgrass	Late June – Early July <i>Summer Annual</i>	It grows well in conditions that desirable grasses do not do well in, including: soils that are low in calcium, compacted and acidic. Since crabgrass needs warmer soil conditions; you will <i>not</i> find it in shady areas of your lawn. You will find it in sunny areas of the lawns; especially along walks and driveways where the radiant heat from the asphalt or brick helps warm the soil. These areas also tend to have poor soil conditions because of the stone pack found along the edges. Another favorite area for crabgrass is on top of the leach field for septic systems.

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Pest	When	Comments
Billbugs Chinch bugs	Early June – August	<p>Billbug and Chinch bug damage resembles drought stress, but the affected turf does not recover in September when the temperatures moderate. If chinch bugs are suspected the best way to scout is to place a coffee can (both ends removed) in the soil and fill with soapy water. Chinch bugs will float to the top after about five minutes if they are present. There are generally two generations of chinch bugs and sometimes a third generation if the weather is particularly hot. Billbugs can often be seen on sunny days on walkways and driveways.</p> <p>Normally if adequate rainfall (0.5 to 1.0 inch per week) or adequate irrigation is received throughout the summer chinch bug activity is masked. The insects may be present, but because the turf is able to grow vigorously, it can outgrow the insect damage. Parasitic Sc nematodes, <i>Steinernema carpocapsae</i>, have shown some promise in controlling these surface feeding insects.</p> <p>If the turf is unable to out-compete the chinch bug damage the best thing to do is to re-seed with endophytic perennial ryegrass or tall and fine fescues after August 15th.</p>
White Grubs	Early– Mid September	<p>Certainly in most organic lawns, grubs are not the problem that the synthetic lawn care industry has made them out to be. In the Northeast white grubs can be from the European Chafer, Japanese Beetle, Asiatic garden beetle and Oriental beetle. The best places to scout are the sunnier, drier areas of the property. Use a square mouth shovel to make two slices in the turf at right angles to one another. Peel the turf back and check in the root zone for grubs. Make sure you really look. If it is a particularly wet summer do not be surprised to find them to be very small even if it is approaching the middle of September.</p> <p>If you find more than 6 grubs per square foot it makes sense to treat them. The best natural treatment I have found is the use of parasitic nematodes, <i>Heterorhabditis bacteriophora</i> (<i>Hb nematodes</i>).</p>
Snow Mold	Late Winter - Early Spring	<p>Often found in the spring of the 1st year lawn is transitioned from a synthetic to an organic program. Late flush of growth brought on by late application of synthetic water soluble nitrogen fertilizer coupled with an early snowfall sets up the opportunity for snow mold which will become evident once the snow leaves the following spring.</p> <p>There are two types, gray and pink,. Gray snow mold should produce no long term ill effects. Pink snow mold can attack the crowns and roots resulting in the need to re-seed.</p>
Red Thread	Late spring, Early fall	<p>Red thread is a foliar disease often signaling that the turf is not receiving adequate nitrogen. While some may consider it unsightly it poses no long term threat to the grass as it does not affect the roots or crown.</p> <p>Improving soil conditions to encourage nutrient cycling and timely application of an excellent all natural organic fertilizer will help diminish potential outbreaks.</p>

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