



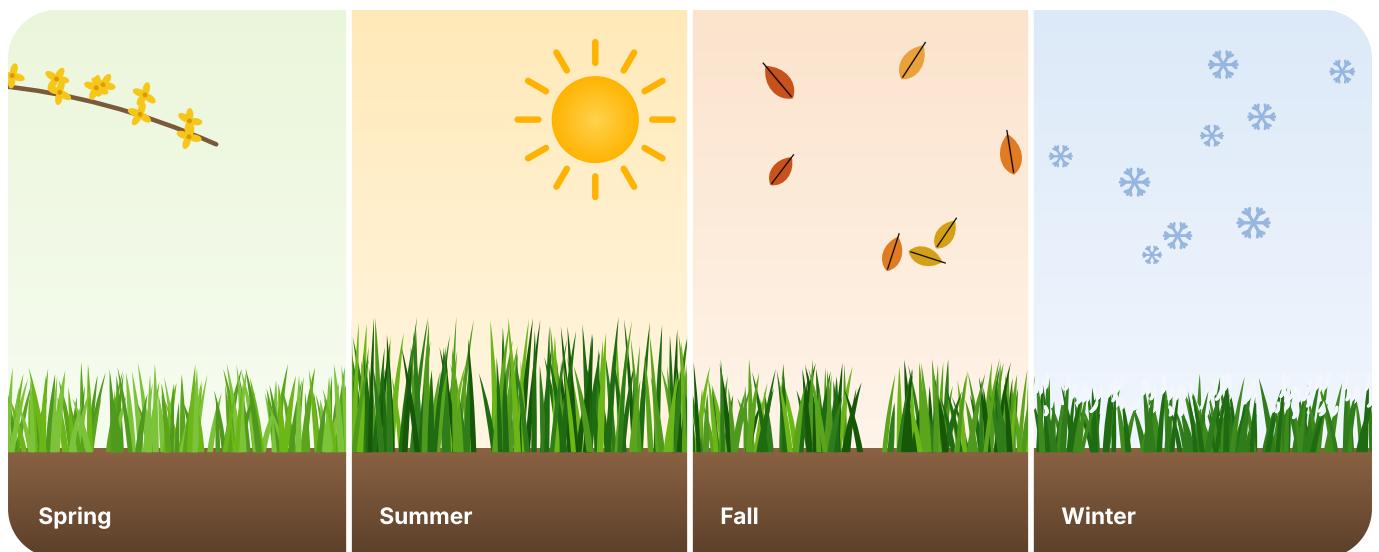
Nashville Aeration Co.

Let your lawn breathe.

Year-Round Lawn Guide · Nashville, TN

Your lawn. All year long.

Everything a Nashville homeowner needs to know, season by season — for tall fescue, Bermuda and zoysia lawns. Built on University of Tennessee Extension guidance, with the local tips most guides leave out.



Sept.

UT Extension's preferred month to core-aerate and overseed tall fescue.

May–July

Late May to early July is the window to core-aerate and dethatch Bermuda and zoysia.

3–4 in.

Mowing height for tall fescue. Taller grass means deeper roots and fewer weeds.

01 • Know your grass

Start with what you're growing.

Nashville sits in the transition zone, where cool-season and warm-season grasses both grow. Each runs on its own calendar.

	TALL FESCUE	BERMUDA	ZOYSIA
Type	Cool-season. UT's pick for most Middle Tennessee home lawns	Warm-season	Warm-season
In winter	Stays green	Straw-brown after frost	Golden-brown after frost
How it grows	In clumps. It doesn't spread to fill bare spots, so it needs reseeding.	Spreads fast by runners above and below ground	Spreads slowly by runners; very dense
Light	Full sun to moderate shade	Full sun	Full sun to moderate shade
Mow at	3–4 inches	1–2 inches (common types can go higher)	1½–2½ inches
Main feedings	September, October, November; light in March and April	May, late June, late July; optional light September	Mid-May to mid-June and mid-to-late July (2 lb a year max)
Aerate	Late August–mid-October, with seed	Late May–early July	Late May–early July
Plant	Seed late August–mid-October; late winter is a backup	Seed, sprigs or plugs May 1–June 30	Sod or plugs in late spring–early summer



Nashville's natural cues

Last freeze	Usually late March to mid-April
First freeze	Usually late October to mid-November
Forsythia blooms	Soil near 55°F: crabgrass preventer time
Soil below 70°F	Late summer: winter weed preventer time on Bermuda
Humid 70°F nights	Brown patch season on fescue
60–80°F days	Fescue seed sprouts best



How to tell them apart

- **Look in winter.** Green means fescue. Tan or straw-brown means Bermuda or zoysia.
- **Follow a runner.** Bermuda sends out wiry runners that root at the joints and creep into beds.
- **Feel the turf.** Zoysia is dense and stiff, almost like a carpet. Fescue has wider, coarser blades in clumps.
- **Mixed lawn?** If Bermuda covers more than about half the yard, talk with us before seeding fescue.

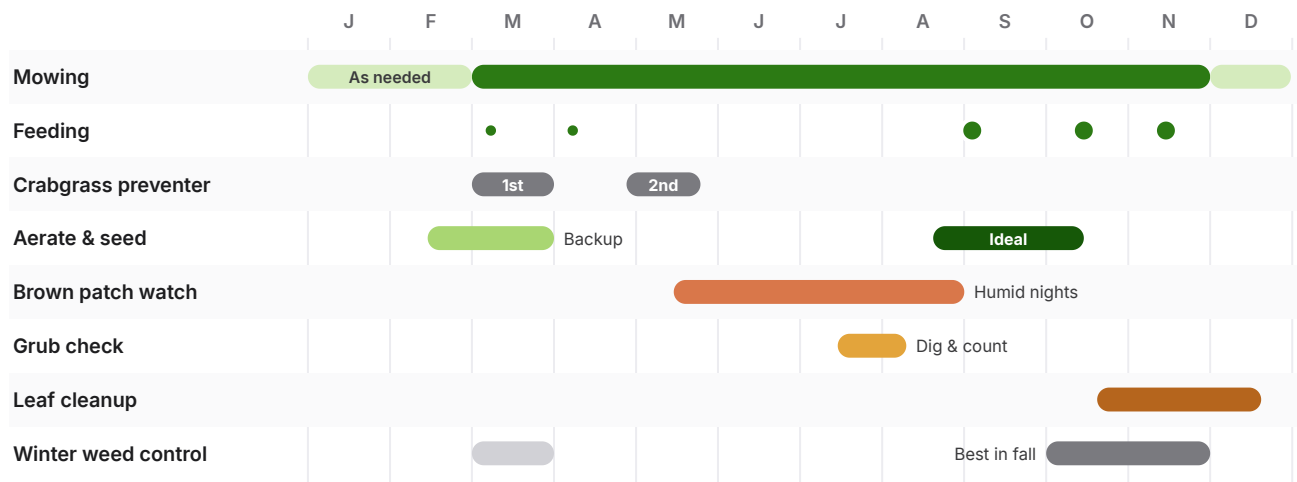
02 · Year at a glance

The Nashville lawn calendar.

When each job happens, at a glance. Exact timing follows the weather and the natural cues on page 2.

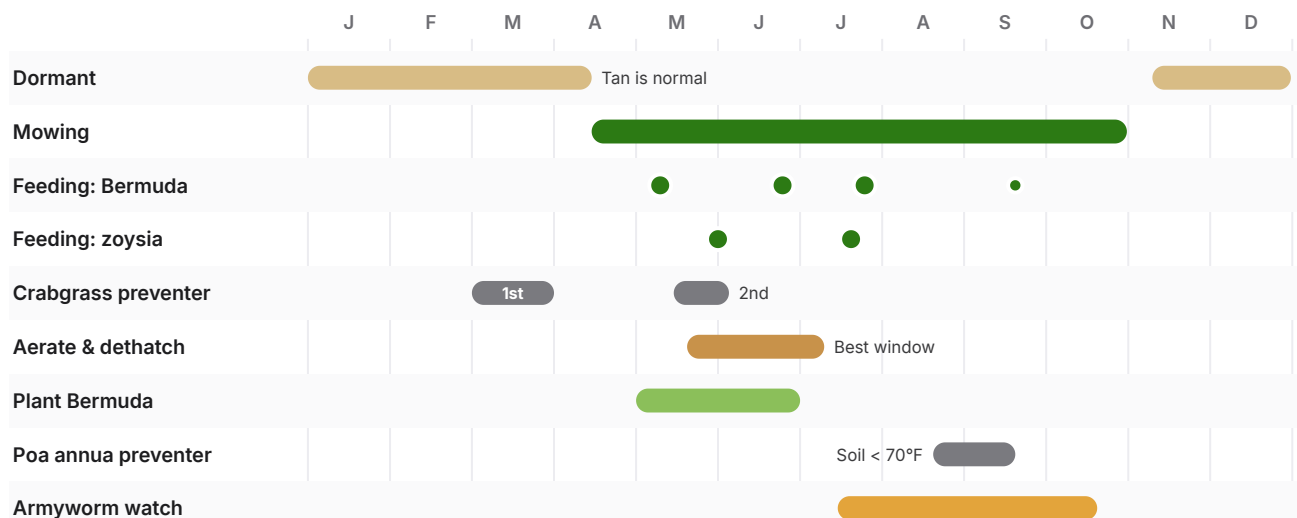
Tall fescue

● 1 lb nitrogen · ● ½ lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft



Bermuda & zoysia

● 1 lb nitrogen · ● lighter feeding per 1,000 sq ft



Timing per UT Extension publications PB1576, PB1903, D141, W146, W159-H, W160-F, W161-C, PB1158 and W203.

03 · Spring · Month by month

Spring, month by month.

Tall fescue wakes up first. Bermuda and zoysia follow as the soil warms. Here's what each lawn needs, and when.

TALL FESCUE

March

Wake-up month

- Start mowing when growth resumes. Keep it at **3–4 inches** and never cut more than a third of the blade.
- **Apply crabgrass preventer when forsythia blooms** (soil near 55°F). Water it in with about ½ inch within 1–2 days.
- **Feed lightly:** about ½ lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft, with at least 30% slow-release.
- Spray winter weeds like henbit and chickweed on days above 55°F, before they flower.

April

Green-up

- **Second light feeding:** about ½ lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft in early-to-mid April.
- Water only when you see drought stress: folded, bluish-gray leaves and footprints that stay.
- Spot-treat dandelions and other broadleaf weeds on mild days, following the label.
- Brown patch every summer? Plan a preventive fungicide starting in May.

May

Growing season

- **Second crabgrass preventer** application, 6–8 weeks after the first.
- **No more nitrogen until fall.** Warm, humid nights start brown patch season.
- Raise the mower toward 4 inches as heat builds.
- Nutsedge appears now. Treat it May–August with a sedge-specific product.
- When it's dry, water deeply — about 1 inch a week — early in the morning.

BERMUDA & ZOYSIA

- Still dormant — tan is normal.
- **Crabgrass preventer at forsythia bloom.** Choose a product with little or no nitrogen.
- Once hard freezes are past, mow dormant Bermuda a bit lower and bag the clippings. Clearing dead growth helps the soil warm and speeds green-up.
- Run each sprinkler zone and fix broken heads before you need them.

- Green-up begins as the soil warms. **Hold off on fertilizer** until the lawn is fully green.
- Begin regular mowing: Bermuda **1–2 inches** (common Bermuda can go higher), zoysia **1½–2½ inches**.
- Zoysia: avoid scalping and early nitrogen — both encourage large patch disease.

- **First feeding:** Bermuda about 1 lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft in early-to-mid May. Zoysia mid-May to mid-June (no more than 2 lb a year in total).
- **Late May–early July:** the best window to core-aerate, and to dethatch if thatch is over ½ inch.
- Second crabgrass preventer, mid-to-late May.
- Plant or patch Bermuda from seed, sprigs or plugs May 1–June 30.



Watch the last freeze. Nashville's last spring freeze usually comes between late March and mid-April. Lower the mower on dormant Bermuda only after hard freezes are past — tender new growth can be injured by a late cold snap.

03 · Spring · Key topics

Get spring right.

The four decisions that shape how your lawn looks all summer.



Crabgrass preventer, done right

- **Timing:** apply when the soil at 2 inches has averaged about 55°F for several days — right as forsythia blooms. In Nashville, that's usually March. Get it down before the last forsythia blooms fall.
- **Water it in:** about ½ inch of rain or irrigation within 24–48 hours activates it.
- **Coverage:** one application lasts 12–16 weeks. A second application 6–8 weeks later carries you through summer.
- **Missed it?** Crabgrass killers work best on young plants, before they branch out.
- **Don't aerate or dethatch afterward.** Breaking the soil surface can open gaps in the barrier.



Seeding and weed preventers

- **Seeded last September or October?** A spring preventer is usually fine on schedule. Follow the label.
- **Seeding this spring?** Preventers stop grass seed too. Skip it on those spots, or use a seed-safe product such as mesotrione or siduron, per the label.
- **Spring seeding is a backup.** UT Extension warns spring seedlings often can't survive summer heat. Patch small areas in late February–March, and plan full aeration and seeding for fall.



Feed light, feed late

- **Tall fescue:** two light feedings, about ½ lb nitrogen each, in March and April. Heavy spring nitrogen pushes leaves over roots and fuels summer brown patch.
- **Bermuda:** first feeding after full green-up, usually early-to-mid May. **Zoysia:** mid-May to mid-June.
- **Read the bag:** $100 \div \text{the first number} = \text{pounds of product for 1 lb of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft}$. For ½ lb, use half that.



Should you aerate in spring?

- **Tall fescue:** UT Extension prefers September, when seed can go down too. Spring coring can help a badly compacted lawn — do it before the crabgrass preventer goes down.
- **Bermuda & zoysia:** yes — late May through early July, while the grass is actively growing. Fertilize afterward to speed recovery.



Mowing heights

- Tall fescue** 3–4 inches (UT range 2½–5)
 - Bermuda** 1–2 inches; common Bermuda can go higher
 - Zoysia** 1½–2½ inches
- Never remove more than a third of the blade at once. Sharpen blades at least once a year — dull blades shred leaf tips.

04 · Summer · Month by month

Summer, month by month.

For fescue, summer is about survival. For Bermuda and zoysia, it's peak growing season.

● TALL FESCUE

June

Heat arrives

- Raise the mower to about **3½–4 inches**. Taller grass shades the soil and roots deeper.
- **No nitrogen.** Summer feeding fuels brown patch.
- Water deeply in the early morning: about 1 inch a week, rain included.
- Watch for brown patch when nights stay above 70°F and it's humid.
- Treat nutsedge while it's actively growing.

July

Peak heat

- Keep traffic light on heat-stressed grass.
- **Don't spray weed killer on stressed fescue**, and skip broadleaf sprays above 85°F.
- **Scout for grubs** from mid-July to early August.
- Start removing Bermuda or dallisgrass that's invading the fescue (July–August).

August

Get ready for fall

- **Book fall core aeration and seeding.** UT's seeding window opens around August 20.
- Get a soil test so pH and nutrients can be corrected at seeding.
- **No fall weed preventer anywhere you plan to seed.**
- Finish Bermuda and dallisgrass removal.

● BERMUDA & ZOYSIA

- **Bermuda:** about 1 lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft in late June.
- **Prime time to core-aerate** (through early July), and to dethatch if thatch is over ½ inch. Feed afterward.
- Mow often enough to never cut more than a third: Bermuda 1–2 inches, zoysia 1½–2½.
- Water up to 1 inch a week. In heat, about ⅓ inch three times a week works well.
- Last call to plant Bermuda: June 30.

- **Bermuda:** about 1 lb nitrogen in late July.
- **Zoysia:** second and final feeding, mid-to-late July.
- **Scout for grubs** from mid-July to early August.
- Watch for fall armyworms from mid-summer on.
- Keep treating nutsedge through August.

- **Late August–early September:** winter weed preventer for annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) once the soil drops below 70°F. Skip areas you'll seed.
- Keep checking for armyworms, especially in new or thin areas.
- Keep mowing at your normal height.



Brown patch weather. Nashville summers bring long stretches of 90°F days and warm, humid nights — exactly what brown patch loves. Mow high, water only in the early morning, and keep nitrogen off fescue until September.

04 · Summer · Key topics

Get through summer strong.

The heat-season habits that keep your lawn alive, healthy and ready for fall.



Water deep, not daily

- **How much:** actively growing fescue needs about 1 inch a week, rain included (up to 1½ in. in extreme heat). Apply about ½ inch at a time, no more than twice a week, to wet the soil 6 inches deep.
- **When:** early morning, about 5–9 a.m. Night watering keeps leaves wet and invites disease.
- **Signs it's thirsty:** a bluish-gray color, folded leaves, and footprints that don't spring back.
- **Measure it:** a rain gauge and the cup test (cans out, 15 minutes, measure) tell you exactly how long to run each zone.
- **Clay soil:** if water runs off, split runs into shorter cycles about an hour apart.



Brown patch on fescue

- **Looks like:** tan patches from 6 inches to several feet across, sometimes with a grayish "smoke ring" edge in the morning.
- **When:** hot, humid stretches — nights above 70°F, days above 90°F, and leaves that stay wet for hours.
- **Prevent it:** no summer nitrogen, water early in the morning only, and mow tall with a sharp blade.
- **Every-year problem?** UT suggests a preventive fungicide once soil holds above about 68–70°F, repeated per the label.



Check for grubs

- **When:** mid-July to early August.
- **How:** cut a 1-foot square of turf 2–3 inches deep, peel it back and count. Check a few spots.
- **Treat if you find:** about 5–10 annual white grubs per square foot (thresholds vary by species).
- **Timing:** preventive products go down from spring to midsummer; curative ones work best July–September, while grubs are young. Water either one in.



Letting fescue go dormant

Without irrigation, fescue may thin or turn brown in summer. If you choose dormancy, NC State and Clemson Extension recommend about ½ inch of water every three weeks to keep the crowns alive. Don't fertilize or spray dormant grass, and keep traffic off it.



Bermuda & zoysia aeration

Late May through early July is the window for warm-season lawns: they're growing fast and heal quickly. Core-aerate to relieve compaction, dethatch if thatch is over ½ inch, then fertilize to speed recovery. Fescue waits for fall.

05 · Fall · Month by month

Fall, month by month.

Fescue grows and roots hard in cool weather. Bermuda and zoysia slow down and head into dormancy after the first frost.

● TALL FESCUE

September

Seeding season

- **Core-aerate and overseed.** September is UT's preferred month.
- **Feed** about 1 lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft in early September.
- Water new seed $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ inch a day, split into 2–4 short cycles.
- No weed preventer on seeded areas.
- Check new seedlings for fall armyworms.

October

Establishment

- **Feed** about 1 lb nitrogen in mid-October.
- Spot-seed thin areas **by mid-October.**
- First mow of new grass at about 4 inches, cutting back to 3.
- Leaves start falling: blow or mulch them off new grass within a few days.
- Treat winter weeds and wild violets now. On new grass, wait until it's been mowed 3 times.

November

Wind-down

- **Last feeding:** about 1 lb nitrogen in mid-November.
- Keep leaves off. Mulch light layers with the mower and bag heavy ones.
- Keep mowing at 3–4 inches while it grows.
- Water new grass in dry spells. Don't shut off irrigation too early.

● BERMUDA & ZOYSIA

- **Raise the mower about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch** in mid-September, before frost.
- **Bermuda:** optional light feeding ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ lb nitrogen) mid-to-late September. **Zoysia:** no more nitrogen this year.
- Winter weed preventer for annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) once the soil is below 70°F, if it isn't down yet.
- Spring dead spot or large patch history? Fall is when fungicides work best. Follow the label.

- Growth slows as nights cool. **Stop mowing after frost** turns it dormant.
- Spread lime now if your soil test calls for it. UT calls fall an excellent time.
- Keep leaves from matting on the turf.

- Dormant and tan — that's normal.
- Treat green winter weeds on mild days.
- Keep leaves and debris off.



Mind the first freeze. Nashville's first fall freeze usually arrives between late October and mid-November. Finish fescue seeding by mid-October so new grass has time to root before cold weather.

05 · Fall · Aeration & seeding essentials

Seed it right the first time.

The short version of our full Aeration & Seeding Guide. Ask us for the complete guide.



Before we arrive

- **Water deeply 1-2 days before** so the soil is moist, not muddy. A screwdriver should push in about 3 inches.
- **Mow to about 2½ inches** and bag the clippings (optional, but it helps seed reach the soil).
- **Flag with wire flags, not paint:** sprinkler heads, valves, shallow pipes, lighting wires, septic lids and lines.
- **Invisible dog fence:** have the wire located and flagged every 2-3 feet.
- **Clear the lawn**, unlock gates and keep pets inside.
- **No crabgrass preventer or weed & feed this fall** — most stop grass seed for 12-16 weeks.

AFTER SEEDING	TARGET	HOW OFTEN	SPRAY HEADS*	ROTORS*
Days 1-14 Until most seed is up	⅛-¼ inch a day in total. Keep the top inch damp.	2 short cycles a day in cool, cloudy weather; 3-4 when hot, sunny or windy	5-10 min a day total e.g., 2 × 4 or 4 × 2	15-30 min a day total e.g., 2 × 12 or 4 × 6
Weeks 2-4 Seedlings about 2 in. tall	About ½ inch per watering	Taper from daily to every 2-3 days	~20 min	~60 min
After 2-3 mowings Established	About 1 inch a week, rain included	½ inch once or twice a week	~20 min per ½ inch	~60 min per ½ inch

*Typical output: spray heads about 1½ in./hr, rotors about ½ in./hr. Rotating-stream nozzles (Hunter MP Rotator, Rain Bird R-VAN) run at about rotor speed. Water early and finish by mid-afternoon so grass dries before night. If water runs off, split runs into ~5-minute (spray) or ~15-minute (rotor) cycles about an hour apart.



First mow & weed control

- Mow when the new grass reaches **about 4 inches**, usually 3-4 weeks after seeding. Cut back to 3 inches.
- Mow only when dry, with a sharp blade, and make wide, gentle turns.
- **No weed killer until the new grass has been mowed 3 times.**



What's normal

- Plugs on the lawn for 1-3 weeks — leave them.
- Seedlings in little tufts from the holes, and thin, light-green fuzz at first.
- A few bare spots in shade and traffic areas. Full results show up next spring.

06 · Winter · Month by month

Winter, month by month.

Fescue keeps growing slowly in mild spells. Bermuda and zoysia stay dormant until spring warms the soil.

● TALL FESCUE

December

Slow down

- **Keep leaves off.** A matted layer blocks light and weakens grass.
- Mow during mild spells if it's still growing, at the same 3–4 inches.
- **No fertilizer** until March.
- Stay off frosted grass until it thaws.

January

Test & tidy

- **Send a soil test** — results come back in time to plan spring.
- Spot-treat winter weeds on mild days. Results are slower in cold weather.
- Use a lawn-friendlier ice melt, and don't pile salty snow on the grass.

February

Get ready

- **Service the mower** and sharpen or replace the blade.
- **Buy crabgrass preventer** so it's ready when forsythia blooms.
- Bare spots? Late February–March is the backup seeding window. Skip preventer on those spots, or use a seed-safe product.
- Spread lime if your soil test called for it.

● BERMUDA & ZOYSIA

- Fully dormant and straw-colored. That's normal and healthy.
- Keep leaves and debris off.
- Spread out foot traffic. Dormant grass can't repair wear until spring.

- Green winter weeds in **fully dormant** Bermuda can be spot-treated on days above 55°F, with a product labeled for dormant Bermuda.
- Send a soil test.
- Note thin spots and weedy areas while they're easy to see.

- Service the mower and buy crabgrass preventer.
- Stop non-selective weed sprays as green-up approaches. Bermuda that's waking up can be injured.
- Plan Bermuda and zoysia aeration for late May–early July.



Spring is closer than it looks. Fescue is ready for its first light feeding in March. Bermuda and zoysia green up as the soil warms, typically April into May, so hold their fertilizer until they're fully green.

06 · Winter · Key topics

Protect it now.

Small winter habits that prevent spring repairs.



Frost, traffic & dormant grass

- **Stay off frosted grass.** Frozen leaves are brittle. Walking on them can rupture plant cells and leave brown footprints. Wait until the frost melts.
- **Fescue stays green** and grows a little on mild days. Mow only if it needs it.
- **Bermuda and zoysia turn tan** after frost and stay dormant until spring warms the soil. Brown is normal.
- **Spread out traffic** on dormant lawns — worn paths can't recover until spring.



Send a soil test

- UT's Soil, Plant and Pest Center in Nashville runs a basic nutrient test for **\$15** (2026 fee).
- Collect soil 6 inches deep from about 10 spots. Mix, air-dry and send about 1 cup.
- Get a box and form from your county Extension office (Davidson County: 615-862-5995).
- You'll get pH, nutrients and exact lime and fertilizer advice.



Ice melt without the damage

- Rock salt (sodium chloride) is the hardest on turf.
- Calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, potassium chloride and CMA are gentler choices. Sand adds traction with no salt.
- Shovel first and use less. Don't throw salty snow onto the lawn.
- In spring, water salt-exposed edges heavily to flush the salt out.



Late leaves

Oaks often hold leaves into winter. Keep clearing them. A wet, matted layer blocks light and weakens fescue. Mulch light layers with the mower, and bag or blow heavy ones.



Winter weeds

Henbit, chickweed and annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) grow all winter. Treat them on mild days, following the label. Prevention works best: a weed preventer in late August or September on Bermuda lawns, and a thick fescue lawn from fall seeding.

07 · Problems & reference

Spot it. Fix it.

The most common lawn problems in Middle Tennessee, and what to do about each.

PROBLEM	WHEN	WHAT YOU'LL SEE	WHAT TO DO
Brown patch Tall fescue	May–August, hot and humid	Tan patches from 6 inches to several feet; a grayish "smoke ring" edge in the morning	No summer nitrogen. Water early morning only. Mow tall. Every-year problem: preventive fungicide once soil holds above ~68–70°F.
Large patch Zoysia	Spring and fall, cool soil	Circular patches with orange-bronze borders	Don't scalp. Avoid early-spring and late-fall nitrogen. History of it: fall fungicide in September and October.
Spring dead spot Bermuda	Shows at spring green-up	Round patches that stay dead as the lawn greens, often in lawns 3–5 years old	Fungicide in fall as soil cools to 70°F. Moderate nitrogen and keep thatch in check.
White grubs All lawns	Check mid-July– early August	Turf that peels back like carpet; skunks or birds digging	Treat at about 5–10 per square foot (varies by species). Curative July–September; preventive spring–midsummer. Water in.
Fall armyworms Bermuda, new seed	Late summer– fall	Grass chewed down fast, often in spreading patches	Soap test: 1–2 tbsp dish soap per gallon over 2 × 2 ft. Established lawns recover; protect new seedlings.
Crabgrass All lawns	Sprouts early– to-mid April	Coarse, light-green summer grass that spreads low	Preventer at forsythia bloom, second application 6–8 weeks later. Treat escapes while young.
Nutsedge All lawns	May–August	Shiny, yellow-green, grass-like weed that outgrows the lawn	Fix overwatering and drainage. Sedge-specific herbicide May–August. Don't pull it.
Winter weeds All lawns	Sprout in fall, flower in spring	Henbit, chickweed and annual bluegrass, green while the lawn rests	Treat in fall, when control works best, or on mild winter days. Bermuda lawns: preventer in late August–September.
Moles All lawns	Moist spring and fall soil	Raised tunnels and soil mounds	Traps in active tunnels. Grub control alone rarely helps.
Bermuda in fescue Tall fescue	Shows most in winter	Wiry runners; tan patches in a green lawn	Removal programs July–August, before fall seeding. Keep fescue thick and tall.

07 · Problems & reference

Quick reference.

 Mowing

Tall fescue 3–4 in.; higher in summer heat and shade (UT range 2½–5)

Bermuda 1–2 in.; common types can go higher

Zoysia 1½–2½ in.

Never cut more than a third of the blade. Sharpen blades at least once a year. Leave clippings on the lawn.

 Watering

Established About 1 in. a week, rain included, ½ in. at a time

When Early morning, about 5–9 a.m.; never at night

New seed ⅛–¼ in. a day in 2–4 short cycles for ~2 weeks, then ½ in. every 2–3 days

Run times Spray heads ~1½ in./hr; rotors ~½ in./hr. Do the cup test.

 Feeding schedules (lb of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft)

	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	PER YEAR
Tall fescue	½ in March · ½ in April	None	1 early September · 1 mid-October · 1 mid-November	About 4
Bermuda	1 early-to-mid May, after full green-up	1 late June · 1 late July	Optional ½–¾ mid-to-late September	Up to about 4
Zoysia	¾–1 mid-May to mid-June	¾–1 mid-to-late July	None	2 max

Read the bag: $100 \div \text{the first number} = \text{pounds of product per 1 lb of nitrogen}$. Never apply more than 1 lb of quick-release nitrogen at once. Test soil every few years (\$15 at UT's Nashville lab); lime only if the test calls for it.

 Tips most guides leave out

- **The cup test.** Cans out, run a zone 15 minutes, measure. Exact run times.
- **Cycle and soak.** On clay, split long runs into cycles an hour apart.
- **The screwdriver test.** Won't push in 3 inches? Too dry to core well.
- **Forsythia is your alarm clock.** It blooms; crabgrass preventer goes down.
- **Fescue doesn't spread.** Yearly fall seeding is what keeps it thick.
- **Go easy on new grass.** Wide mower turns, a blower instead of a rake.

Based on University of Tennessee Extension publications PB1576, PB1903, PB1935, PB842, PB1158, PB1303, W146, W159-A, W159-H, W160-B, W160-F, W161-C, W161-F, W161-I, W161-M, W203, W205, W260, W807, W1068, W1359 and D141, the UT Soil, Plant and Pest Center, plus NC State, Clemson and Purdue Extension where UT is silent. Always follow product labels.



Questions? We're here to help.

Proudly serving Lenox Village, Nippers Corner, Antioch, Cane Ridge, Crieve Hall and nearby Brentwood and Nolensville.

nashvilleaeration.com

Request service at
nashvilleaeration.com/contact