



# Grass Roots

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## Turf talk 2011.5

This is the time of year when we are reminded about why they call cool season grasses (the blues, rye and the fescues for most lawns) cool season grasses. I did some cursory investigation to pass along how cool season grasses do in the everyday world in which we live. The optimum temperatures for shoot growth are between 60 and 75 degrees. In the upper 70s, root growth is slowed and may stop. Shoot growth stops at 90 degrees. As you can see, not much good happens for the cool season grasses when we have our typical Nebraska summer. In a weakened condition, cool season grasses succumb more easily to damage from traffic, drought, disease, and insects. We see more fungus because the humidity and the temperatures are at levels in which the disease can flourish. Heat and traffic just add to the problem. Fungicides are available for treatment. Not inexpensive, they can slow the growth of the disease and make recovery more bearable.

We continue to recommend syringing (running an abbreviated irrigation cycle during the hottest part of the day) on days where temperatures exceed 90 degrees. It can cool the surface temperature of your lawn significantly, reducing one of the stresses.

We are often asked about spraying weeds this time of year. Many weeds form a protective barrier in the heat of the summer to minimize water loss through the leaf structure. That same barrier makes foliar uptake less effective. This, coupled with the fact the weeds, while present, may not be actively growing, makes spraying at the high end of the acceptable temperature range less effective. We continue to stress that the best defense against weeds is a dense stand of healthy turf. Overseeding until you reach that density is the best bet.

Lawns that show minor stress and/or damage will look good again this fall as temperatures and humidity moderate. Lawns that require intervention can show significant improvement in the fall and will look good again next spring.



## The Rain Gauge

For a normal month of August, your turf should receive approximately 2.0 - 2.25 inches of precipitation per week. Precipitation per week is the combined amount of Mother Nature's rain plus anything you add to it. Excessive watering will only waste water and promote unhealthy growing conditions in a variety of ways.

## Sealant protects investment; prolongs the beauty of pavers



Paver patios, driveways and sidewalks are beautiful additions to any landscape. We all know that the durability of a good paver application is second to none. But how do we make the surface easier to clean or clean the existing stains? How do we preserve that great wet look seen in pictures or after a rain?

A thorough cleaning and a sealant application!

Sealing forms a durable protective film, making the surface easier to clean. If you have an older paver surface, installing a polymeric sand will harden the sand in the joints, solidifying the area while preventing erosion caused by weeds, ants and wind. Depending on the elements, sealant will protect the texture and surface of pavers and prevent staining for 2-4 years, although it can be applied as frequently as desired.

Sealants are available in a variety of finishes including high gloss, low gloss, and matte. Sealant can also be used on other surfaces throughout your landscape. It can also be applied to other hardscape materials such as concrete and stone.

Cleaning and sealing pavers is an invaluable way to extend the appearance of your pavers. If you are interested in learning more about this service, please call us.



In a shameless bit of self promotion, CM's is proud to announce its participation in the 2012 Best of Omaha competition.

Beginning July 1, voters can select CM's A Cut Above as the Best Landscape, Irrigation and Lawn Care company in Omaha. Yep, that's right, you can (and we hope you do) vote for us in three different categories!



## Reminders

1. Schedule turf renovation or aeration & overseeding.
2. Schedule irrigation system review.
3. Schedule tree pruning.
4. Schedule holiday lighting installation.

## Extreme makeover – the turf version

Yes, August is time to start aerating and overseeding or renovating your turf. Why now?

Well, you can chalk it up to Nebraska's growing season. Taking remedial steps now to improve the health of your turf gives new grass plants adequate time to establish before winter, producing a lush lawn in the spring. It generally takes three weeks for seed to germinate, become viable and benefit from the year's final fertilizer application.

Annual aeration does wonders for weary turf, breaking down soil to allow better flow of oxygen, nutrients and water to the plants' root systems. Overseeding introduces improved plant varieties to turf and, in doing so, improves the health and durability of a lawn. Our turf maintenance and fertilizer crews may have already recommended these services based on their regular visits, however, if you are unsure about the best option for your lawn, please call us.

In order to provide these services to our clients in a timely manner, we will begin aerations as early as August 1, weather permitting. With the unpredictable Nebraska climate, our last seeding date is September 20. This date safely allows seed to germinate and take advantage of optimal growing conditions.

Many of you have already subscribed to this service through your annual contract renewal, guaranteeing your place in the schedule. If you have not already done so and you would like to take this opportunity to breathe new life into your lawn, call our office today.

## Too hot for you? Beat the heat with holiday lighting



August is the ideal time to start thinking about the holidays. Why? Because you can take advantage of this **cool** holiday lighting offer:

**10% off** all holiday lighting materials on new holiday lighting contracts signed by August 31.

This offer is perfect for every homeowner and a great gift idea, too. You know how hard it is to find that unique gift for parents and grandparents. Why not surprise them with holiday lighting this year?

Installations begin in November and the schedule will fill quickly. Scratch holiday lighting off your to-do list early this year. Call us for more information regarding estimates and schedules.

Limited time offer.

New holiday lighting contracts only.

Contracts must be signed by August 31, 2011.



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