

More on spring lawn care tips

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As I mentioned last week lawns are really greening and growing; mowers are running full speed ahead.

I have one question for you, "Are your mower blades sharp?" If not, you are going to see a bit of a brownish cast to the overall look of the lawn.

When you cut that grass blade, you are damaging the cells. If you have a nice sharp blade that makes a good clean cut, the damage is minimal.

If you have a dull mower blade that tears and shreds the turfgrass blade, it leaves a ragged edge on the leaf blade. Therefore, the overall look to the lawn tends to be brownish.

After you mow, take a close look at the edge of the grass leaf blade and make sure you have a nice clean cut.

I also mentioned that nimblewill is showing up in lawns due to its brown color against the greening turfgrass.

A few readers reminded me of another herbicide that helps take care of this problem without killing the turfgrass.

Tenacity (active ingredient mesotrione) is a relatively new product on the market. It has a unique class of chemistry and a diverse label and is somewhat expensive. An eight ounce bottle can be purchased online for around \$60.00.

It is a pre- and post-emergent herbicide that controls broadleaf weeds and annual grasses. It is also successful in killing nimblewill.

I sometimes hesitate to mention this product due to its cost but also due to the fact that you really have to be conscientious about following label directions. You still may have to reseed large patches of nimblewill.

If you have had crabgrass problems in the past, it's time to apply pre-emergent herbicides in the lawn to prevent growth.

Crabgrass seeds germinate when soil temperatures are 56F for several days. At this point, in the Miami Valley area, soil temperatures have barely reached 50F. The recent cooler weather has slowed things down considerably.

A pre-emergent herbicide has to be on the ground prior to germination. Therefore you still have time.

In order to really help with crabgrass control, thicken up the turfgrass through a regular fertilization program.

My lawn is thick enough now that we don't use pre-emergent herbicides. In addition, since it's thick, we only have to spot-treat for any other weeds.

Fertilizer helps to thicken up your turfgrass. Regular applications of high nitrogen fertilizer made at the appropriate times provide the nutrients necessary to keep grass growing.

This is typically four times a year. However, if you want to cut back on fertilization, the two most effective times to fertilize would be in the late summer and fall. Apply one in September and another later one in late October.



Close up shot of ragged turfgrass from dull blades.



Overall appearance of turfgrass when mower blades are dull