

## Time to think about fall lawn care

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Once the rains came and our lawn greened up, we noticed some dead spots in the front yard. After checking for the common insect suspects and finding no symptoms, we determined it was simply due to the drought.

The dead spots are small enough that they will likely fill in since we have Kentucky bluegrass. This type of turfgrass spreads by rhizomes and with these good rains and a fall fertilization, our lawn will be back to normal before too long.

If you have brown spots, be sure to check for insect damage first. White grubs and bluegrass billbugs are two of the common turfgrass insects that we see around here.

White grubs feed on the roots and when you pull a section of the dead turf, it comes up like a carpet.

Bluegrass billbug damage is similar in terms of the dead patches but they don't feed on the roots so that entire brown patch won't pull up easily. They feed on the leaves and the larvae are more damaging as they feed on the crowns.

If you determine you have either one of these, there are good resources online to help you come up with the solution and treatment.

If you have a turf-type tall fescue lawn and you have bare spots, you will need to re-seed those areas in order for the lawn to fill in.

This type of grass doesn't spread by rhizomes. One seed equals one plant, therefore, you need to spot-seed any dead patches in order to fill in the lawn.

As always, when re-seeding a lawn or just filling in bare spots, loosen up the soil as best you can. Good seed to soil contact is necessary for best germination and growth.

You can use a hard-nosed rake to do this. I have an old de-thatching rake that has pretty sharp tines and it does a great job.

If we continue to get these periodic rains, you won't have to water. However, if fall turns dry, make sure you keep the seedlings moist.

This is the best time of the year to seed a lawn. Turfgrass prefers cool nights and warm days in order to germinate. We are entering that perfect window.

In addition, early September is the optimal time for fertilizing the lawn. I know you are probably thinking – why would I want to encourage the grass to grow – I am already mowing too much.

This fertilization coupled with another one in eight weeks are the two best applications to make. They encourage healthy root growth that leads to a healthy turfgrass stand.