

Turf Fertilization Tips for Fall

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With fall fast approaching it's time to start thinking about best management practices for a healthy transition from warm to cold weather for your turf.

Our area experienced extremely cold weather last winter, which may have contributed to some lawns partially killed out by the cold – also known as

“winter kill”. The good news is that the effects of cold weather may be reduced by proper maintenance and fertilizer practices.



A healthy root system is essential for disease resistance, as well as improved drought, cold, and wear tolerance of turf. And as the weather starts to cool and daylight hours shorten, warm season turf and deciduous ornamentals begin to shift their energy allocation from leaf and shoot growth to root storage. During this stage of growth, carbohydrates are stored in the roots (also called “hardening off”) to increase plant survival over the winter and spring green-up when warmer weather returns.

Macro and micro nutrients found in nature and in fertilizers are utilized by plants for the food it needs to survive. Among the macro nutrients, nitrogen fertilizer applications should be avoided in the fall and winter to avoid pushing growth on warm season turf. Potassium is a macro nutrient that is vital for carbohydrate storage and root development. This nutrient can be applied during the year as part of a regular fertility program, and especially in the fall to aide with proper root function and nutrient storage for the winter months.

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