Fall Lawn Care is Right Around the Corner
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Relief from the summer heat is right around the corner. Finally. Cooler temperatures mark the beginning of fall lawn care season.

If you’re from up North, like me, then planting in the fall may seem counter-intuitive, as Northern winters dictate spring planting. However, seeding a lawn in the spring in North Carolina greatly reduces its chance of survival. Most often, spring-seeded grass hasn’t had enough time to develop deep roots, which would sustain it through the hot, dry, long summer months. The best time to fix an old fescue lawn or establish a new one is mid-August to early September.

If you’re considering renovating your lawn this fall, it is important to take the time to do it correctly. My turf grass professor used to compare planting a lawn to making coffee. If you leave out even one step, you not only don’t get your coffee, but you have to go through the process all over again.

Following a few easy steps will increase your chances of success:

Get down to bare ground. Weeds need to be killed and removed from the area, so that grass seeds can get established. Leftover weeds will easily outcompete the grass seedlings.

Soil test. Now is a good time to get your soil sample done. Turnaround times are averaging about a week. Kits are free and available at the Extension office.

Amend soil. Add recommended fertilizer and lime amounts from the soil test report, and till to a depth of 6 to 8 inches.

Don’t sow too much seed. Just as you can sow not enough grass seed and not get a dense stand, you can also sow too much seed. Excessive amounts of seed will result in weak seedlings that compete with one another. Tall fescue seed should be sowed at a rate of 6 lbs/1000 ft². Rates vary if tall fescue is mixed with other grass species.

Mulch. Add a layer of straw over the seeded area to help seeds germinate.

Water. Watering is essential in seed germination. Watering multiple times daily may be necessary.

Developing a healthy stand of grass is the key to a successful lawn. Or, if you’re like me, you can surrender to nature and let the weeds take over. After all, they’re green, too.

The Iredell County Extension Office will hold a fall lawn care workshop Saturday, August 20 from 9 to 11 am. Register by calling 704-873-0507.