

P.O. Box 7220, Tempe, Arizona 85281
Web site address: www.fourpeakslandscape.com
E-mail address: info@fourpeakslandscape.com
Phone number: (480) 967-0376

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It's Overseeding Time!

Overseeding of bermuda grass is necessary in order to maintain a green lawn throughout the year in the deserts of Arizona. Bermuda naturally goes dormant and turns brown in or around late November after our first frosts of the winter.

Ryegrass is the grass of choice for overseeding Bermuda. Both Annual and Perennial rye grass are available. While both are acceptable, perennial rye will provide a more aesthetically pleasing lawn with a darker green color than that of annual rye.

In preparation for overseeding, Bermuda should not be heavily fertilized after August 15, since nitrogen will favor more growth and less food storage. Excess fertilization of Bermuda in late August can make the Bermuda more competitive than ryegrass and will result in poor winter growth of the ryegrass.

Dethatching (removal of dead and dying grass) of the Bermuda should also be completed at least 2 months prior to overseeding.

In Phoenix, overseeding is typically done around the first of October when temperatures are more moderate. This allows for slower bermuda growth and quick germination of the rye seed.

Follow the steps below for successful overseeding of your bermuda lawns.

1. Approximately 3–4 days prior to overseeding, turn off the irrigation to the grass. This encourages premature dormancy of the bermuda which in turn helps rye growth.
2. Scalp (mow) the bermuda to about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch in height. This allows for rye seed to soil contact and plenty of sun light for the germinating seed. Remove the clippings.
3. Sow the rye grass seed using a rotary spreader at the rate of 8–12 pounds of seed per 1000 square feet. For best results, apply $\frac{1}{2}$ of the seed in 2

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different directions for uniform coverage. At the same time as seeding, fertilize with a high phosphorus fertilizer such as 6–20–20 to encourage root growth of the rye grass following the label on the bag.

4. Composted steer manure can be used as a top-dress to help with seed germination. While not necessary, it does help to keep the seed moist and to reduce loss of seed due to birds. Be sure to use only a light top dressing as too much can cause damage to new grass seedlings.
5. Set up automatic irrigation systems to irrigate 3–4 time daily for the first 2 weeks. It is necessary to keep the seed moist but not over water to the point that water puddles. Depending upon the type of sprinklers, typical run times should be about 4–5 minutes. Start time should be approximately 8:00 am, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Adjust as necessary to prevent drying and puddling of water.
6. Once the seed has germinated, reduce the irrigation run times gradually. As a rule of thumb, decrease one start time for each week after germination until the grass is irrigated once per day. Daytime temperatures will also determine irrigation needs.
7. Complete the first mowing when the grass reaches a height of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Maintain mowing heights from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 2 inches for best results
8. Begin nitrogen based fertilizer applications after the first mowing following labeled instructions on the bag. A good typical fertilizer to use would be 16–20–20. Subsequent nitrogen based fertilizers should be applied every 3–4 weeks until the end of November and will help to maintain a green color through winter.

PRUNING MATURE TREES, PART 1

By Gary McCunn, Certified Arborist WE-7255A



Pruning is the most common tree maintenance procedure. Although forest trees grow quite well with only nature's pruning, landscape trees require a higher level of care to maintain their safety and aesthetics. Pruning should be done with an understanding of how the tree responds to each cut. Improper pruning can cause damage that will last for the life of the tree, or worse, shorten the tree's life.

Reasons for Pruning

Because each cut has the potential to change the growth of the tree, no branch should be removed without a reason. Common reasons for pruning are to remove dead branches, to remove crowded or rubbing limbs, and to eliminate hazards. Trees may also be pruned to increase light and air penetration to the inside of the tree's crown or to the landscape below. In most cases, mature trees are pruned as a corrective or preventive measure.



Routine thinning does not necessarily improve the health of a tree. Trees produce a dense crown of leaves to manufacture the sugar used as energy for growth and development. Removal of foliage through pruning can reduce growth and stored energy reserves. Heavy pruning can be a significant health stress for the tree.

Yet if people and trees are to coexist in an urban or suburban environment, then we sometimes have to

modify the trees. City environments do not mimic natural forest conditions. Safety is a major concern. Also, we want trees to complement other landscape plantings and lawns. Proper pruning, with an understanding of tree biology, can maintain good tree health and structure while enhancing the aesthetic and economic values of our landscapes.

When to Prune

Most routine pruning to remove weak, diseased, or dead limbs can be accomplished at any time during the year with little effect on the tree. As a rule, growth is maximized and wound closure is fastest if pruning takes place before the spring growth flush.



Heavy pruning just after the spring growth flush should be avoided. At that time, trees have just expended a great deal of energy to produce foliage and early shoot growth. Removal of a large percentage of foliage at that time can stress the tree.

Next month I will cover Pruning Techniques and how much should be trimmed at any one trimming. So as always remember to hire a Certified Arborist to do any type of tree work on your trees.

Fall Irrigation Chores

By Jim Trog, CIA, CIC

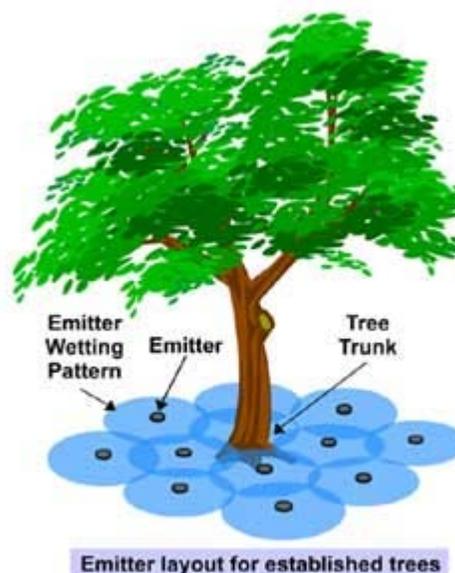


As the summer heat breaks and Fall is just around the corner, people are headed outside to once again enjoy the landscape. Now is the time to complete some irrigation chores that we may have let go this summer.

Full irrigation check – Turn each station on from the controller to be sure that it not only turns on, but it also fully turns off. A valve that seems to run or seep may need to have its diaphragm replaced. Check for sprinkler head alignment in the turf and minimize overspray. Be sure that sprinklers are vertical. Heads that may have been bumped by the lawnmower over the summer could be leaning which reduces how uniformly they apply water. Clean the filter on your drip valves and flush the end of the lines.

Plantings – Now is a great time to get new shrubs and trees in the ground. Although they may not appear to grow much in the next few months, they are busy establishing roots that will sustain the plant next

summer. When placing drip emitters for new trees, it is important to establish two “rows” around the tree. The first row should be at the edge of the root ball, the second row should be at the drip line of the canopy. This second row will allow for expansion of the root system and future growth. See example at below.



MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Valentine Bush
- √ Desert Honeysuckle
- √ Bat-Faced Cuphea
- √ Desert Spoon
- √ Hop Bush
- √ Cape Jasmine
- √ Red Yucca

– General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)

- √ Bermuda Grass Turf (if you are not overseeding) irrigated using typical pop-up

sprinklers: 6 – 8 minutes two times per week.

- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 20 minutes two times per week. These times are for ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.

Drip irrigation for Trees: 25 minutes one

- √ time per week. These times are for ornamental type trees. Native or xeriscape trees will require less.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended until the soil dries.