

Buffalograss Calendar

In recent years, buffalograss has become more prevalent in Kansas lawns as a notoriously low-maintenance grass. Water and fertilizer requirements are minimal, especially compared with other turf grasses. Although competition with weeds, especially in eastern Kansas, can be a barrier to a lush buffalograss lawn, proper management can alleviate most weed issues. If buffalograss lawns pique your interest, use the following calendar as a guide for care and management.

March

As broadleaf weeds make their springtime debut, use a spot treatment for control. The crucial timing for treatment of broadleaf weeds should be in late October to early November—well after the buffalograss is dormant. Treatments are much more effective in fall as the weeds are smaller and the weeds are sending energy, as well as the herbicide, to the roots.

Treatments in March are for surviving weeds only. Spray early enough in March that the buffalograss is still dormant. To check for dormancy, look at the base of the plant for green shoots. Green means the grass has already begun to break dormancy and you should avoid spraying. Treatment should be on a day that is 50 degrees F or warmer. Rain or irrigation within 24 hours of application will reduce effectiveness, so make sure to check the forecast. A combination product such as Trimec, Weed-B-Gon or Weed-Out are most effective. Weed Free Zone is also good and will give quicker results under cool conditions.

April

Crabgrass preventer should be applied between the 1st and 15th of the month. Another indication of timing is when the eastern redbud is in full bloom. A product with prodiamine (Barricade) must be applied two weeks earlier.

Crabgrass preventers *must* be watered in for activation.

Now that the buffalograss is greening, broadleaf herbicides should not be used. Although an application wouldn't kill the grass, it will stunt its growth, making your lawn *more* susceptible to weeds.

June

June is time to fertilize! One pound of nitrogen per one-thousand square feet will suffice for buffalograss. As with all chemical applications—more is not better. Additional nitrogen will give your buffalograss a deeper green but will also encourage weeds. A soil test will provide you with recommendations for phosphorous and potassium as well as any pH adjustments that may be required for your soil.

If grubs are a continual issue in your lawn, June to mid-July is the time to control. Apply a product containing imidacloprid as these products kill the grubs before they begin feeding on your lawn. Application can be as early as mid-May for either billbugs or May beetle grubs. As with earlier crabgrass preventers, watering in this chemical is key to activation.

If you don't normally have grub damage, do not treat for grubs! If you've seen grub damage, treatment should focus on certain areas, rather than spraying the entire lawn. Beetles are more likely to lay eggs

(that become grubs) around lights or in moist soil. If you've had grubs, treat these areas first and gauge how effective control is before making repeat applications.

Late-July through August

Keep an eye out for grub damage during this time. If an application for grub control was made in June, you should not need to re-apply. You can fertilize again in July, although weeds should be considered before doing so as overfertilization can promote weed growth.

Late October to Early November

Now that fall has arrived, broadleaf weed spray can be used, if broadleaf weeds are a problem in your lawn. You should carefully examine your lawn as chickweed and henbit, winter annuals, are small and can be easily overlooked. If spray is needed, use a product that contains 2,4-D as it increases effectiveness on dandelions. As with spring applications, treat on a day that is at least 50 degrees F. Again, watch for rain as rain or irrigation within 24 hours reduces effectiveness.

Along with properly timed chemical control, regular mowing reduces broadleaf weeds in buffalograss, as broadleaf weeds cannot survive consistent mowing. If annual grasses (crabgrass or foxtail) are an issue, they can be prevented with prodiamine, pendimethalin or dithiopyr. With all chemical control, labels should be followed exactly.

More information on buffalograss can be found at:

<https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf658.pdf>

If you would like to see buffalograss in person, visit the Shawnee County Extension Master Gardener Xeriscape Demonstration Garden at 1740 SW Western Ave. <https://www.shawnee.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/XeriscapeGarden.html>