

Let's Grow a Great Lawn!

If you want a great lawn, now is the time to take action.

September is the best month to sow seed, fertilize, kill weeds and aerate your lawn.

Here are some things you should do this month.

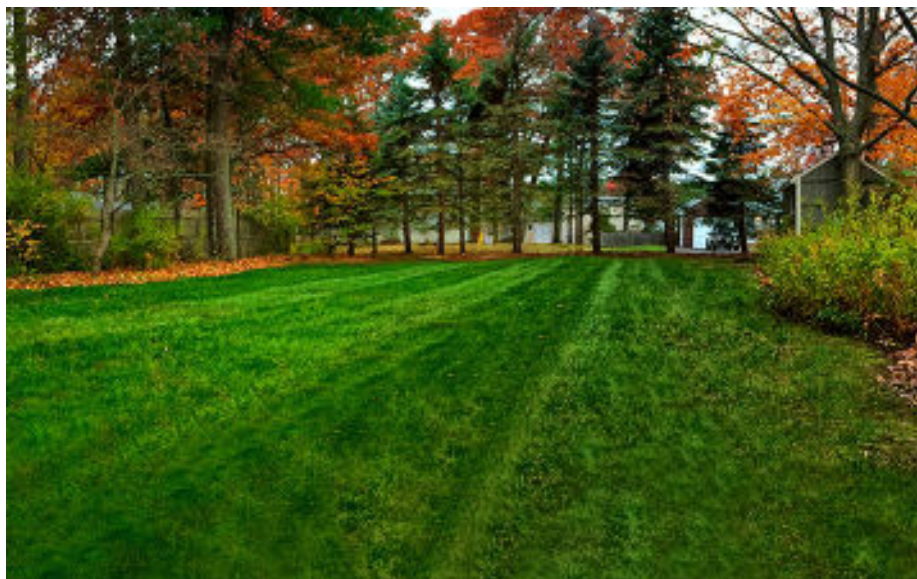
Fill in bare spots. Now through mid-September is the best time to sow grass. The seeds will germinate quickly in the warm soil. As a bonus, weed seedlings rarely germinate in the fall, so we don't have to worry about them. Awesome!

Choose a high-quality seed mix with a blend of grasses. Most seed mixes will include cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass, fine/red fescues and perennial ryegrass.

Kentucky bluegrass is a hardy grass that should be the predominant grass for sunny areas. The fine/red fescues are best for shade. Perennial ryegrass is a nice addition to a mix because it germinates rapidly and stabilizes the soil while the other lawn grasses emerge.

This also is a terrific time to lay sod. It will quickly "knit" into the soil.

Fertilize. Fall is the most important time to fertilize your lawn. Lawns grow vigorously and grow most of their roots this time of year. If you fertilize your lawn only once a year, do it in September. Labor Day is a good date to target for fertilizing.



September is the best month to improve your lawn.

Fertilizer has three major components: nitrogen, phosphate and potash. Nitrogen is most important for turf growth. Look for a fertilizer that has more than 20% nitrogen.

Select a fertilizer with slow-release nitrogen. This fertilizer will promote the growth of roots this fall and provide for a vigorous greening up of the lawn in the spring.

Phosphate is least important because it is already abundant in most soils. Potash will help the lawn become hardy for winter. Look for a "winterizer" fertilizer that has at least 10% potash.

Do not fertilize your lawn if it has not come out of its summer dormancy. You may burn it.

Kill broadleaf weeds. Mid to late September is the best time to kill broadleaf weeds, including dandelions, thistles and clover. As days get shorter, the weeds begin moving nutrients down into their roots to prepare for winter.

This is good for us because a herbicide sprayed on a weed at this time will be absorbed and naturally

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Plant Health Care

Fruits and Vegetables



Harvesting Apples

Harvest when the background color of the fruit's skin turns from green to yellow. Fruits will come off easily when ripe. Harvest by using an upward and twisting motion to avoid damaging spurs, where next year's fruits develop.



Scorch on Pepper

Tissues directly exposed to sun will turn light and may wrinkle. This most often occurs with fruits growing on plants with few leaves. Promote healthy vine growth through fertilization and irrigation.



Slow to Ripen Tomatoes

Optimal ripening temps are 68–77°F. The more temps stray from this range, the slower reddening occurs. Clipping vines won't help. If frost threatens, fruits with a blush may ripen indoors.



Harvesting Cantaloupe

A ripe fruit slips off with a gentle tug. The entire stem comes out (*full-slip stage*) as shown. Rind is yellowish. Fresh-market melons may be harvested with a firmer tug. Half of the stem attachment will remain in this case (*half-slip stage*).



Watercore on Apple

Air pockets inside the fruit become filled with sugary liquid. Fruits are very sweet but will not store long. Many factors may cause watercore, including the susceptibility of the cultivar, low calcium, high nitrogen and poor yield.



Harvesting Pears

Harvest before fully mature. Pick when its skin changes from dark green to yellowish green; its skin texture begins to feel waxy and smooth; and spots on the skin change from white to brown.



Black Scurf on Potato

Spuds have muddy bumps that won't rub off. Peel off scurf. Remove vines in fall. Don't plant potatoes in this area for 2 years. In spring, don't plant in cold soil. Sow no deeper than 2 inches. Seed may be treated with sulfur. Harvest promptly.



Bacterial Spot on Tomato

Corky spots (diameter of pencil eraser) appear on fruits. Occurs under warm temps (mid 70s to 80s). Spots develop on vines. Stay out of garden and wounding vines when vines are wet. Copper sprays will prevent spread.

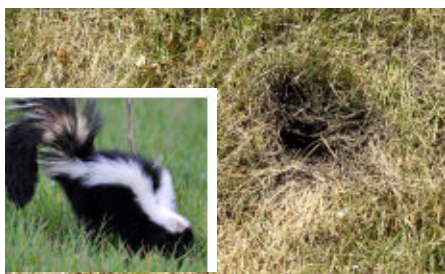
Plant Health Care

Landscapes



Fall Needle Drop

Don't worry; old needles (located near the trunk) are supposed to turn brown and drop to the ground. As long as the young needles (located near the tips of branches) are healthy, the tree is full of life.



Skunks

Skunks dig for grubs at night, creating small holes in lawns. Kill grubs with insecticide; skunks will hunt elsewhere. Outdoor lighting or rags soaked with ammonia will repel skunks. Grub problems decline now as grubs burrow deeper to escape the winter cold.



Crabgrass

Crabgrass plants will die after a frost. Pull or mow the weeds to prevent them from going to seed. Herbicides (often added to spring fertilizer mixes and lawn weed killers) can be applied next year to prevent new plants from emerging.



Divide/Transplant Peony

Peony beds that are crowded and lack vigor can be divided now. Cut stems to the ground and dig up roots. Shake off the soil and cut the crown into sections. Each section needs 3–5 eyes and a strong root system. Space new sections 2–3 feet apart with eyes only 1–2 inches deep. Mulch after ground freezes.

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sent down into the weed's root system, killing the entire plant. Bye, bye weed!

Aerate. The vast majority of lawns never need to be aerated, but all lawns will enjoy it. September is the best time to aerate the lawn. This is when roots grow, and aeration promotes new roots. Compacted ground (walkways and heavy soils) especially will benefit from aeration.

Hollow tine or core aerators are recommended because they create air pockets by removing plugs of soil/thatch (cores) from the turf. Let the cores dry for a couple of days and then mow to break them up.

Remove cores as deeply as possible (about 3 inches) when aerating. You obtain the best results when the soil is slightly moist but not wet. If the soil is dry, irrigate it one or two days before aerating.

You can fertilize after a core aeration to encourage the recovery of the turf. Lawns may be overseeded after aeration, too.

Now is the time for lawn improvement. Let's get busy!

Credits

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Written by Tom Kalb, who expresses gratitude to the Horticulture/Forestry Team for their contributions to this report.

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NDSU

EXTENSION

Weather Almanac for August 31–September 6, 2020

Site	TEMPERATURE ¹				RAINFALL ^{1,4}				GROWING DEGREE DAYS ^{1,5}			
	Aug 31–Sep 6				Aug 31–Sep 6		2020		Aug 31–Sep 6		2020	
	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	56	62	82	34	0.16	0.38	8.56	12.14	71	76	1848	1851
Bowman	62	63	89	40	0.00	0.26	7.28	10.24	91	83	1899	1914
Carrington	61	63	83	43	0.05	0.50	8.96	13.83	78	80	2000	1995
Crosby	59	60	88	36	0.08	0.30	7.54	10.58	78	75	1803	1716
Dickinson	63	62	89	40	0.00	0.34	7.21	11.69	87	84	2030	1891
Fargo	63	65	78	49	0.05	0.68	15.77	14.01	82	87	2290	2145
Grafton	59	62	77	42	0.47	0.64	16.56	13.80	69	77	2017	1859
Grand Forks	61	62	77	44	0.26	0.56	13.18	13.67	73	77	2076	1911
Hazen	60	64	87	37	0.00	0.35	11.15	11.89	83	89	1959	2078
Hillsboro	60	64	78	43	0.17	0.55	18.01	13.97	71	80	2114	2025
Jamestown	62	63	85	47	0.06	0.60	8.88	13.22	77	78	2008	1985
Langdon	56	60	78	39	0.27	0.45	10.75	13.75	63	67	1753	1594
Mandan	64	64	90	43	0.00	0.39	5.63	12.87	90	81	2111	1990
Minot	60	62	84	40	0.06	0.37	7.66	12.18	77	74	1902	1822
Mott	62	63	90	38	0.00	0.30	9.17	11.05	91	88	1955	1974
Rugby	58	61	83	38	0.07	0.44	7.92	13.51	75	76	1910	1844
Wahpeton	62	66	79	45	0.02	0.76	15.90	14.50	82	93	2205	2236
Watford City	62	62	87	41	0.00	0.26	6.77	10.28	85	81	2008	1908
Williston	63	65	89	43	0.00	0.32	4.39	10.12	89	91	2063	2152
Wishek	62	62	87	42	0.00	0.35	9.69	11.76	85	76	2016	1810

DAYLENGTH (September 7, McClusky, ND)²

Sunrise: 7:09 AM Daylength: 13h 2m
 Sunset: 8:11 PM Change since Aug 31: -24m

LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS³

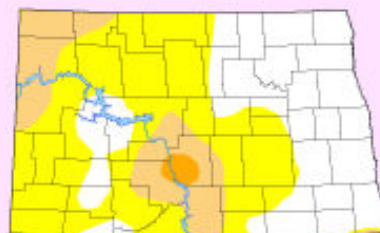
Sep 12–16: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Below Normal
 Sep 14–20: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Below Normal

^{1,2,3} Sources: North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, and National Weather Service, respectively.

^{4,5} Rain data begin April 1. GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F, respectively.

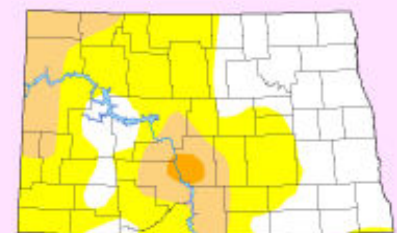
Drought Watch

There were no positive developments last week, and no signs of relief are in sight. “Abnormally dry” conditions persist in much of western and central North Dakota. “Moderate drought” conditions extended into Golden Valley and Billings Counties. Weather forecasts for the next four weeks call for colder, drier conditions across the state. Sources: Adnan Akyuz, NDSU; Drought Monitor and NOAA.



August 25, 2020

- Abnormally dry: 61% of state.
- Moderate drought: 16% of state.
- Severe drought: 1% of state.



September 1, 2020

- Abnormally dry: 61% of state.
- Moderate drought: 18% of state.
- Severe drought: 1% of state.