

Happy Valentine's Day

FEBRUARY 2016

The GREENLEAF

NEWSLETTER

SHADES  
OF  
GREEN INC.

HOURS: MON - SAT 8:00 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M.  
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## “WHAT KIND OF TURF IS BEST?”

by Jeff McCauley

We hear this question often from customers and landscape clients. There are many types of turf grasses on the market, however they do not all fare well in our north Texas region. Here are our recommendations.

Types of turf grass that can be started from seed are:

- **Common Bermuda** can be seeded, or hydro-mulched, when the nighttime temperatures are 70-degrees or more. Watering needs to be done three times a day for the first 21 days – morning, mid-day, and evening – for it to germinate properly. Most customers don't have that option due to watering restrictions. Be aware that with this watering routine, not only will the Bermuda seed germinate, everything else sprouts up as well. Bermuda needs full sun to be successful.
- **Annual Rye** seed does best when germinated in full winter or very early spring, as it will perish when the temps get above 90-degrees. It can take sun or shade. This is a temporary grass that is usually planted to hold the soil in place until something else is planted. Perennial Rye doesn't last all year in our area. Some clients like to over-seed their lawn with Rye so their grass is green in the winter months. Be aware that this takes a lot of water, and again this is hard to do with water restrictions that may be in place.
- **Fescue** seed can be germinated similarly to Bermuda, however the best time to start Fescue is Spring and Fall. It does better in the shade where it is cooler, as Fescue usually suffers when temps rise above 90-degrees.

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## FEBRUARY 2016

# TIMELY HINTS

**Plant ...** Cool season annual color such as **Alyssum, Snapdragons,** and **Dianthus,** as well as **Pansies and Violas.** Plant **Perennials, Shrubs,** and **Trees,** too!! We have a great selection of the best and hardiest varieties of trees for our area. From large shade trees to smaller sized ornamental trees ... you can plant them now. New arrivals include **Fruit Trees -- Peach, Pear, Plum, and Apple!** Now is the time to move or transplant dormant trees and shrubs.

**Prune ...** Finish dormant season pruning (major pruning) on trees and shrubs this month. You may clean up your perennials to get ready for March's spring weather. Come join us for our **Pruning Class on Saturday, February 20th,** if you need guidance. Remember prune with a purpose. Only **you** can prevent "Crape Murder"! Prune roses in mid-month. Prune groundcovers late in the month to tidy up. Wait till March to prune on freeze damage.

**Fertilize ...** Late February (around the 17th-28th) is time to fertilize your whole yard with **Gardenville 7-2-2.** Lawns, beds, vegetable gardens, shrubs, and trees all will benefit. Download our article **'How To Fertilize Your Tree'** from our website, or pick up a copy at the nursery.

Apply **Greensand** now as well. Greensand is a natural source of iron. Our clay soils hold onto iron tightly, so I encourage you to apply Greensand in February and in September to provide plenty of iron for your plants, especially evergreens. Hollies, Magnolias, Live Oaks, etc. These plants maintain green foliage through the winter and utilize more iron in their foliage to keep those leaves green in the winter. Applying Greensand on an annual basis replaces the iron that gets depleted as these plants establish.

Continue to apply **Bloodmeal, Colorstar, or Colorscapes** on Pansies and other annual color every two weeks for eye-popping color.

**Water ...** Leave the sprinkler controller in the **OFF** position. If we don't get at least 1/2" of rain every two weeks, consider watering manually once every two weeks. A rain/freeze sensor installed on your sprinkler system will save \$\$\$ over the year and most irrigators aren't too busy now so it's a good time to get one if you don't have one. **Please continue to be responsible with your water use.**



**Pests ...** Use **Dormant Oil** to control scale on Crape Myrtles, Hollies, Live Oaks, and other plants. Remember, the first step is to identify the pests, then use an appropriate control.

**Weed Prevention ...** Mid-February to late February is time to apply **Corn Gluten Meal**, or non-organic pre-emergent, to inhibit weeds from developing from seed. With our warmer-than-normal winter temps recently, weeds may be showing up sooner. Be ready to apply pre-emergents by February 15th. This is a preventative measure, so it won't cure existing weeds, but it can prevent new ones from coming up. **[Pick up a copy of our 'Monthly Gardening Calendar Chart' at the nursery, or download it from our website.]** Please stop in to speak with one of our nursery staff. We can guide you to the most effective product for your lawn!

### **Other Bits and Pieces ...**

**Got Bunnies?** – We have a great product in the nursery we have been using to stop rabbit damage on our plants. **"Animal Stopper"** is available both as a granular or liquid product and has been keeping the rabbits at bay for us. The product is safe, organic and comes with satisfaction guaranteed.

### **A Fond Farewell ...**

After 13 loyal years with us, we bid a fond farewell to our Nursery Manager, Randy Stinnett, as he embarks on a new future. He will be very missed for his many contributions over the years. The staff and I wish him the best of luck in whatever endeavor he pursues. **THANK YOU**, Randy, from

**all** of us at Shades of Green! **-Jeff**



# TURF

...CONTINUED

Turf grasses that are started with sod due to the seed being sterile and needing to be propagated vegetatively, include:

- **Bermuda** (all types), but to name a few:
  - **Common Bermuda** is the most popular because it can be mowed with a rotary mower and is the only one that can also be germinated from seed.
  - **Tifway 419 Bermuda** needs to be mowed at a lower level every 4-5 days with a reel-mower.
  - **Tifton 328 Bermuda** also needs to be mowed at a lower level (same as 419).
  - **U-3 Bermuda** is the most popular and used the most in the DFW area. It can be mowed with a reel or rotor mower.
- **Zoysia** [*pronounced zoi-see-uh, -shuh*] can only be sodded. There are numerous varieties of Zoysia. One of the many attributes of this grass is that it performs well in sun or shade. The three most popular types for our area are:
  - **Palisades Zoysia** looks just like common Bermuda, and mowing it is the same.
  - **Emerald Zoysia** is a fine bladed grass and prefers a reel-mower.
  - **Toro Zoysia** can be mowed with a reel or rotary mower.

Once you've decided on the best type of turf grass for your landscape, you'll need to prepare the soil for either seed or sod application.

Here are some general guidelines -- Scarify the area, filling the low areas and removing the high areas. This can be done with the native soil, however sometimes adding a little sandy material is helpful for consistency. Use a good dirt rake and rake everything over 1/2" into a pile and remove. When you're finished laying sod, be sure to roll it with a sod-roller.

# PRUNING: *It's An Art*

by Tony Dennis

Here in North Texas knowing *when* to prune is as important as knowing *what* to prune – and how much. Why we prune, and the reasons for pruning need to be taken into consideration.

- ◆ to remove dead or winter die back
- ◆ to train or shape the plant
- ◆ to stimulate growth and/or flowering
- ◆ to restrict or maintain plant dimensions
- ◆ to maintain plant health
- ◆ to repair damage



## When to prune?

Generally, pruning in North Texas can be done any time of year. For trees and shrubs, major pruning is usually done as they are about to come out of dormancy. Because of our wonderful weather this is hard to predict. To fix a date, use Valentine's Day as a guide. The last two weeks of February are a good choice as we usually start to fluctuate in temperatures. The average last frost date (in our county) is around Saint Patrick's Day. This is only an average, however for the past two years we have hit it pretty close. Small herbaceous perennials are best pruned in late winter or early spring. They can be deciduous like trees, or die all the way to the ground. For the woody plants, usually only shaping is required for aesthetics. Removal of the dead plant material is required. Dead limbs and branches will not come back to life. And lastly, dead-heading of flowering plants can be done year round as required.

## What tool to use?

For dead-heading use garden shears or scissors. For larger branches and heavier pruning, hand held bypass pruners should be used. For material 1/2" up to 1", bypass loppers and/or a hand saw can be used. We recommend hiring a certified arborist for any larger branches – for safety for you and the tree. Remember, all tools you are using should be clean and sharp.

## How much or what to prune?

This depends on your criteria and plant type.

For trees and large shrubs, you should prune for esthetics or for plant health. Examples are low, or in the way, branches or limbs. To fix the wild-hair syndrome, or branches that are out of place. For symmetry, for shaping. And after storms or high winds to repair damage, heal, and shape.

For small shrubs and bedding plants the type of pruning varies depending on if the plant is deciduous or dies to the ground. We are fortunate that we do not get cold enough temperatures for our ground to freeze. This allows us to grow many plants that will come back from the roots. However, we do tend to get a "wake-up call" every few years and experience a bitter cold snap that lasts 72-96 hours. During those times we do tend to lose a few borderline plants. Living in more urban areas tends to keep us a little warmer.

Grasses, from our lawns to ornamentals, can and should be pruned to remove the dead material.

We will be holding a class on pruning on **February 20th** here at Shades of Green. Because this subject is so extensive and quite particular, I can answer questions and give specific examples during this time. We do have a list available at the nursery that tells when to prune perennials, and how much to prune.

# Free Pruning Class!

Come On Out And Join Us!  
Bring your spouse, a neighbor,  
and especially any  
'Crape Murderers' you know of!

**February 20, 2016**  
**Saturday 2:00pm**

Register for the Door Prize!!  
We'll be giving away a FREE Corona Hand Pruner!




# Veggie Talk Presentation

with Tony Dennis  
Master Gardener

**Saturday, Feb. 27th 11:00am**




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**Must be able to work weekends. Full-Time and Part-Time Available.**  
**Knowledge of Plant Material a must. Salary based on experience.**

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