



EL PASO COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Year Round Gardening: **Late Season Lawn Care**

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Autumn is an active growing season for cool season grass. Cool season grasses like blue grass, fine fescue and perennial rye are the most common lawn grasses in our region. A little attention at the end of the season can yield huge dividends in the coming spring.

Core aeration is frequently done in spring, but there can be a lot of benefit to repeating the aeration in autumn. If your lawn is looking thin, or stressed consider aerating the turf. Aeration will break up compacted soil, the little holes punched in the sod get water and oxygen to the root systems of the existing grass. Landscaping and lawn maintenance contractors can perform this service for you, or you can rent a core aerator and do it yourself

Lawn fertilization in fall is really beneficial to your turf, and unlike spring fertilizer applications it won't cause you to mow more frequently. In the fall fertilizer is more likely to cause your grass to put out new stolons (the underground structures by which grass spreads) so it will help the lawn to thicken. Apply a product that contains both Nitrogen and Potassium (N and K). If you need more detailed information check out the Colorado State University publication HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO: Fertilizing Your Lawn and Garden (<https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/xcm222.pdf>).

This is a good time to do some weed control for perennial weeds in your lawn. It is important to identify what weed you are treating. Annual plants die back in winter and do not come back from the roots in spring.

They reproduce by dropping seed during the growing season. Annual weeds are best controlled by an early spring application of a pre-emergent weed control which prevents the seed from growing into a weed. Examples of annual lawn weeds include spurge, crabgrass and purslane.

Perennial weeds are weeds that go dormant in the winter but grow back from the roots in spring. Once established these weeds can be difficult to control, they can spread by runner and seed. If you cannot identify your weed, take a photo and upload it to the eXtension Ask an Expert service

(<https://ask.extension.org/ask>). This online resource is a great way to get answers to your gardening questions.

Examples of common perennial broadleaf weeds in our lawns are dandelions, black medic and bindweed. Just improving the condition of your lawn will not remove these weeds. They can be dug up, but it is very difficult to get long taproots out completely. There are products available that can be used to kill these broadleaf weeds. Spot treat weeds, broadcast application of these products is not recommended. Be sure to read the herbicide label and follow all directions before application. The label is the law. If you have trees or shrubs either in the lawn, or nearby, avoid products, such as Triclopyr, that are effective in controlling woody plants. Those products may damage your trees or shrubs.

When you have questions, Colorado State University Extension has research-based answers. The Help Desk is at 17 N. Spruce St will not be staffed regularly after Oct 9. You may still call or email but response may be delayed. As an alternative contact eXtension Ask an Expert at <https://ask.extension.org/ask> with your home gardening and food safety questions.