



## Turfgrass Maintenance Guidelines for Established Lawns

### *Meyer Zoysia*

*The following are general guidelines for maintaining warm-season turfgrass in the St. Louis area. Please note that the guidelines refer to established lawns. For care of new sod, refer to our brochure: Watering New Turfgrass Sod.*

#### **WATERING**

Once established, zoysia should receive approximately 1 inch of water per week, by either rain or irrigation. Mature lawns should receive deep, infrequent waterings, approximately every 5 to 7 days, to promote a healthy, extensive root system. Watering too frequently will result in shallow roots and weaker turf. Ideally, water in the early morning to minimize evaporation. Remember – you need to maintain soil moisture even during dormancy.

Water requirements may vary from lawn to lawn due to soil conditions, terrain, etc. In order to practice responsible water use, you should learn to recognize signs of dry turfgrass. Zoysia in need of water will have a greyish cast, rather than its normal green color. The grass blades may also shrivel and have a “pine-needle” appearance. Turfgrass in this condition should be watered immediately. Inspecting your lawn frequently will help to detect water requirements for your lawn and to avoid over- or under-watering. Consult our watering guide for greater detail.

#### **MOWING & DE-THATCHING**

Grass should be mowed on a regular basis during its growing season. Optimal mowing height for residential lawns is 1” to 2”. Keep mower blades sharp for a clean cut. As a general rule, never cut off more than 1/3 of a grass blade at a time. Should your grass get “too tall”, take it down gradually over the next few mowings. If you are mowing frequently enough, there is no need to remove clippings, as they are actually beneficial if left to decompose naturally.

De-thatching can be done after April 15<sup>th</sup> if excessive thatch is a problem. However, properly maintained zoysia should not require de-thatching. If excess thatch occurs, decrease the amount of nitrogen fertilizer used, or convert completely to organic fertilizer. Organic fertilizers naturally help eliminate thatch in zoysia and contribute to healthier turf.

#### **FERTILIZATION**

Fertilizer should be applied 3 to 4 times per year, using the following schedule as a general guide. Always use a high-quality turf-grade fertilizer. Use a rotary-type spreader for best results. Apply in two different directions to avoid streaking. Fertilizer should be watered in immediately. To maintain zoysia color, light applications of nitrogen fertilizer (1/2 recommended rate) may be applied between the recommended applications. Only apply if unsatisfied with turf color.

May 1 – May 15	Apply a balanced fertilizer (such as 12-12-12) at the recommended rate. Or apply an organic product, such as Milorganite or Nature Safe at 1 ½ to 2 times the recommended rate.
July 1 – July 15	Apply a fertilizer with higher nitrogen content (such as 24-3-8) at the recommended rate. Use slow-release if available.
August 15 – September 1	Apply a balanced fertilizer (such as 12-12-12) at the recommended rate. Or apply an organic product at the recommended rate.

#### **WEED, INSECT, AND DISEASE CONTROL**

Use crabgrass pre-emergent control *without* fertilizer around April 15<sup>th</sup>. Broadleaf weeds (clover, dandelion, ivy, thistle, etc.) may be controlled with granular or sprayable products. Consult a local garden center for available products. Granular products must be applied in morning when there is dew on the grass. Sprayable products are ideal when weed pressure is sporadic. Grassy weeds can also be spot-sprayed, but usually require different products than broadleaf weeds. When spot-spraying, be careful to apply at proper rates, as to not damage the turf. Herbicides should be avoided when temperatures exceed 90°F. To control white grubs and other insects, apply insecticide with the active ingredient “imidacloprid” between June 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>. Timing is important for effective control. Be sure to water in. Under proper watering and fertilization, zoysia should experience little disease pressure in warm weather. Zoysia patch may occur in early spring. Control zoysia patch by minimizing thatch and avoiding fertilizing in cool weather.