



September 1, 2011

# Prime's Clippings

Prime Landscape Services, Inc.

Our offices will be closed Monday Sept. 5  
Have a great Labor Day!



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## Fall Can't Get Here Soon Enough!

No reason to harp on our record setting summer of pain for our plants and psyches, but Saturday August 13th stands out as the day that maybe kept some of us from giving up. That was the day DFW got the first widespread rain, a good slow rain that lasted several hours for most. August 11 was the day the 100 degree streak broke, but going into Sept. it looks like we may break the 1980 record of most days over 100. The drought persists, but it's amazing how much better a break in the pattern can make you feel. We know that temps will start to normalize in September,

and hopefully the drought will end. Just a drop in temps will help plants (and people!) start to recover. We should soon be able to get back out in our yards and look forward to our Fall gardening projects, albeit with a little damage assessment.



## Fall Pre-emergent - The Most Important Application

If you are on our regular lawn application program you will be receiving an application of pre-emergent weed control in September—October. **If you are not on our full service program, call today to schedule. This is the most important lawn application of the year!** Winter weeds begin germinating in September and October, and depending on weather conditions may not be noticeable until spring. But if you want the best chance of reducing or eliminating those unsightly weeds you see in March, you must treat the seeds now!

Dandelions, thistles, henbit, chickweed, oxalis, rescue grass, and poa annua are the biggest culprits in our spring gallery of weed problems, and most of these seeds will start sprouting when soil temperatures at the surface drop below 70 degrees. It doesn't take too many days of cool cloudy weather to achieve this,



so timing is critical. Pre-emergents rarely offer 100% control, but they will make a big difference. Pre-emergents work by creating a chemical barrier in the soil that kills the seedling as it starts to emerge. This application is normally combined with a broadleaf weed post emergent control to kill any that have already sprouted. Heavy rains or wet winters may dilute or move the chemical barrier deeper in the soil sometimes reducing effectiveness.

Our Fall application also includes fertilizers to get your lawn ready for dormancy. Nitrogen helps thicken the lawn and smother weeds, and potassium builds stronger root systems to help your lawn through hard freezes and promote early green-up in spring.

For organic applications, corn gluten meal has been documented to provide some pre-emergent control and is an excellent source of slow release nitrogen.

*Our goal is to fulfill the needs of the customer by providing timely, quality services and products.*

**Thanks for your business!**

### September Chores:

- Mow weekly
- Water only when needed
- Treat fire ants
- Overseed rye grass
- Apply weed pre-emergent
- Sow wildflower seeds for spring



## Drought Brings Out The Worst

The record drought has magnified problems both typical and atypical to our hot summers. Any voids in sprinkler coverage are painfully obvious, and some yards even show isolated problems in areas where brick sand or construction debris was buried in the lawn. Chinch bugs have been worse, and the Texas Ag Extension Service has identified another disease of St. Augustine, Nigrospora stolon rot, that mimics the symptoms of drought. Another unusual issue has been tire tracks in the lawn from mowers. These show up in lawns under stress from lack of water. Follow this link for more useful information.

<http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu/files/2011/08/2011-Lawn-Drought-Stress-Article.pdf>

## Fall Bird Feeding



Wildlife across Texas and surrounding areas has suffered this year due to the drought. If ever there was a time to put out some feed to help our feathered friends, this is it. Not only will you be helping our local birds survive, Fall is also when many migrants will begin appearing in our yards on their journey south. Common guests may include juncos, cedar waxwings, yellow

rump warblers, red breasted nuthatches, goldfinches, or-

ange crowned warblers, and more. Different seed blends can attract different species, so read the label or visit with a knowledgeable clerk at your local bird store or feed store for the best choices to use now. And most importantly this year, don't forget to provide a source of water! From a simple bird bath to a fountain to a water garden, the birds will thank you.

A great source of information on birding can be found at your local Audubon Society, [www.FWAS.org](http://www.FWAS.org)

*"If you build it, they will come." Including squirrels too, unfortunately!*



## Ryegrass Season Starts in September

Over-seeding with Ryegrass for the winter is a popular practice that benefits your lawn and sets your home or business apart from the crowd. Over-seeded lawns have fewer winter weed issues as weed seeds have a difficult time germinating in the thick green cover provided by healthy turf. And after a summer like this of struggling to keep your lawn from turning brown, you might enjoy the fact that winter normally brings enough rainfall to keep your rye green with little or no supplemental watering once established.

A green winter lawn also creates a nice foreground or background for early spring flowers such as daffodils, dogwoods, Mexican plums, azaleas, and spireas. Think about how much more attractive these blooms are when framed by lush green grass instead of dormant brown lawn! Your neighbors will take note.

There are 2 types of Rye seed available, annual and perennial. Annual rye seed is less expensive but will need to be mowed every 3-5 days in the spring as it's rate of growth is quite fast. Perennial ryegrass



seed is more costly but well worth it. Perennial rye is more refined, with a darker green color and slower rate of growth. It can be mowed just once a week in the spring. In our area the term perennial is not accurate in regards to rye, as most ryegrasses burn out in June. In shady areas or if we have prolonged cool, wet weather into the summer ryegrass may persist longer into the summer.

The normal preparation for over seeding is to mow the lawn a few notches lower and rake or bag the clippings during the last half of Sept. through October. This allows the seed to make better contact with the ground and improves germination. Depending on rainfall, the seed should be watered daily until it is up and growing. Once it is up, mowing requirements will vary depending on the weather and type of seed you used. Mowing once every 14 days is usually the norm. Light fertilizing in December and February will really enhance the appearance, especially if we are having a dry winter.

### Food for thought

*"Imagine what life would be like without landscape contractors. We provide a vital, valuable, and necessary service to the community. Having great gardens is part of being civilized. Beautiful landscaping drives traffic to retailers. It sustains and improves commercial and residential property values. It improves the quality of all of our lives."*

From an article in Landscape Management magazine