

## **NORTH CAROLINA FESCUE LAWN MAINTENANCE CALENDAR**

### **March through May**

#### **Mowing**

Mow lawn to 3 inches in height. Mow at least once a week. Mow before grass gets above 5 inches tall.

#### **Fertilization**

DO NOT fertilize tall fescue after March 15.

#### **Irrigation (PROVIDED FROM NC STATE- REMEMBER TO ABIDE BY ALL COUNTY WATER RESTRICTIONS)**

Tall fescue needs 1 to 1 1/4 inches of water every week, ideally all at once. A dark bluish-gray color, footprinting, and wilted, folded, or curled leaves indicate that it is time to water. Water until the soil is wet to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Use a screwdriver or similar implement to check. Sandy soils require more frequent watering (about 1/2 inch of water every third day). Because clay soils accept water slowly, irrigate just until runoff occurs, wait until the water has been absorbed, and begin watering again. Continue until the desired depth or amount is applied. Proper irrigation may prevent or reduce problems later in the summer. Watering between 2 and 8 a.m. decreases the incidence of certain diseases.

#### **Weed Control**

Apply preemergence herbicides to control crabgrass, goosegrass, and foxtail. Apply by the time the dogwoods are in bloom.

### **June through August**

#### **Mowing**

Raise mower height to 3 1/2 inches. Mow before the grass gets above 5 inches tall.

#### **Fertilization**

DO NOT fertilize tall fescue at this time.

#### **Irrigation (PROVIDED FROM NC STATE- REMEMBER TO ABIDE BY ALL COUNTY WATER RESTRICTIONS)**

Either water as needed to prevent drought or allow the lawn to go dormant. About 1 inch of water per application each week is adequate for irrigated lawns. Sandy soils often require more frequent watering, or about 1/2 inch of water every third day. Do not discontinue irrigation in midsummer. Water dormant lawns every three weeks in the absence of rain.

#### **Insect Control**

Check for and control white grubs in July and August.

#### **Disease Control**

Check for brown patch disease.

## September through November

### Mowing

Mow to 2 1/2 to 3 inches in height.

### Fertilization

The best way to determine your lawn's nutrient needs is by a soil test. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Agronomic Division, provides free soil testing. In the absence of a soil test, use a complete nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) turf-grade fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio (that is, 12-4-8 or 16-4-8). Fertilize with 1 pound of actual nitrogen (N) per thousand square feet in mid-September and again in November (about the time the grass is green but not actively growing).

### Irrigation

Water following guidelines for March through May.

### Weed Control

Apply broadleaf herbicides to control dandelions and other weeds if necessary. Caution: Some herbicides may affect newly seeded turf. Follow label directions.

### Insect Control

Check for white grubs in September and October; fall is the ideal time to control white grubs.

### Aerification

Core lawns subject to heavy traffic or on clay soils to minimize compaction and improve rooting. Break up plugs.

## December through February

### Mowing

Remove lawn debris (rocks, sticks, and leaves). Mow lawn at 3 inches and remove clipping debris at spring greenup. Mow before grass gets taller than 5 inches.

### Fertilization

Fertilize with 1 pound of actual nitrogen per thousand square feet in February. \* (Click here for sample calculations). In absence of soil test results, use a complete (N-P-K) turf-grade fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio.

### Irrigation

Water, if needed, to prevent excessive drying. About 1 inch of water per application each week is adequate.

### Weed Control

Apply broadleaf herbicides as necessary for control of chickweed, henbit, or other weeds.

**FOR SOIL TESTING AND MORE INFO, GO TO: [www.ces.ncsu.edu](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu)**