SIMPLY TURF

FREE GUIDE

NORTHERN VIRGINIA LAWN CARE GUIDE

LET'S GROW.

What to do to your lawn in every month of the year, and why fall matters more than spring.

From Simply Turf, Gainesville, VA

simplyturf.com

START HERE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Northern Virginia lawns are cool season turf in a transition zone climate, so the year has two growing peaks and one survival stretch. **Fall is the most productive season**, spring is for crabgrass prevention and a light feeding, and summer is for protecting what you have.

1 FIND YOUR MONTH

The calendar on pages 3 and 4 shows what the lawn is doing, what to do and what to skip.

2 WATCH THE SOIL

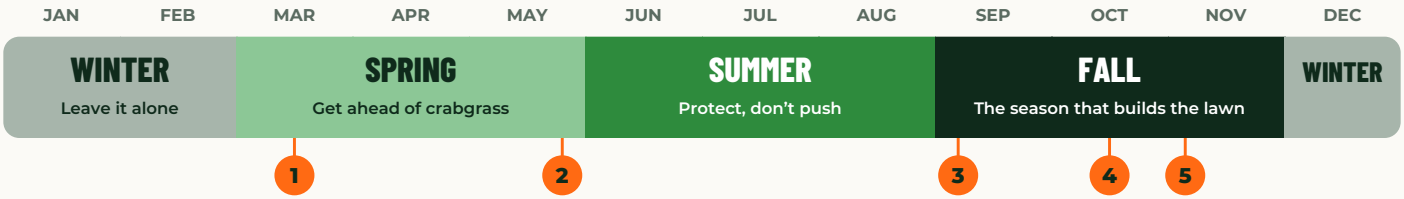
Dates shift a week or two with the weather, and soil temperature beats the calendar.

3 PLAN YOUR FALL

Page 5 covers aeration and overseeding, and page 6 covers kids and pets.

A note on who does what. Fertilizing, weed control, aeration, overseeding and compost topdressing are jobs we do. Mowing and watering stay with you, so we have included the basics for both.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE



1 MID-MARCH
Pre-emergent, before soil reaches 55°F

2 LATE MAY
Last comfortable window for a real feeding before the heat

3 EARLY SEPTEMBER
Aeration and overseeding

4 MID-OCTOBER
Second fall feeding

5 EARLY NOVEMBER
Final feeding and last mow

TALL FESCUE BASICS

Tall fescue survives a Northern Virginia summer better than any other cool season grass, so it covers most lawns here. Its roots run far deeper than Kentucky bluegrass, and it takes more shade than most turf. It doesn't spread to fill bare ground, so **mow high, water deeply and add seed every year**.

MOW
3.5 IN

Mow at 3.5 inches most of the year, raise it to 4 inches for summer and drop to about 3 inches for the final mow. Never take more than a third of the blade at once, and keep it sharp.

WATER
1 IN

Give it about an inch a week in one or two long soakings instead of a little every day. Water early and finish by about 9am, since grass left wet overnight invites fungal disease.

OVERSEED
EVERY FALL

Each plant grows from its own crown with no runners, so when one dies in August nothing replaces it. Aerate and overseed every fall.

WATCH FOR
BROWN PATCH

Roughly circular tan patches in humid stretches from late June through August, worst in shade, low spots and dead air. Mow high, water at dawn and open up airflow.

THE CALENDAR, JANUARY TO JUNE

MONTH BY MONTH

Do the heavy work in fall, prevent crabgrass in spring and protect the lawn in summer. Dates shift a week or two with the weather, and soil temperature beats the calendar.

Winter Spring Summer Fall KEY DATE the five dates that matter most

JANUARY
WINTER

THE LAWN
Dormant

DO
Plan the year and keep leaves cleared.

SKIP
Walking on frozen grass. Dormant turf needs almost nothing.

FEBRUARY
WINTER

THE LAWN
Dormant, soil thawing

DO
Service the mower and sharpen the blade. A dull blade shreds fescue and gives disease an entry point all season.

SKIP
Anything beyond mower prep. The lawn is still resting.

MARCH
SPRING

KEY DATE
Mid-March

THE LAWN
Green-up begins

DO
Apply crabgrass pre-emergent before soil at 2 inches hits 55°F, usually mid-March.

SKIP
Waiting on the calendar. Soil temperature sets the date, and a warm February can pull it forward.

APRIL
SPRING

THE LAWN
Fast top growth

DO
Feed lightly with a moderate slow release rate, make the first mow at 3.5 inches and spot treat broadleaf weeds.

SKIP
Pushing growth with heavy feeding. Skip spring seeding too.

MAY
SPRING

KEY DATE
Late May

THE LAWN
Peak spring growth

DO
Apply a slow release feeding, the last comfortable window before the heat, and the second pre-emergent split. Watch for stiltgrass.

SKIP
Spring seeding. New seedlings almost never survive their first Northern Virginia summer.

JUNE
SUMMER

THE LAWN
Growth slowing, heat starting

DO
Raise the mowing height to 4 inches and watch for brown patch, round tan patches that show up in humid stretches.

SKIP
Pushing fertilizer into June. Brown patch hits lush, heavily fed turf hardest.

THE CALENDAR, JULY TO DECEMBER

MONTH BY MONTH, CONTINUED

Cool season grass builds roots when the soil is warm and the air is cool, and that only happens here from late August through October. A lawn fed and seeded in September goes into July with deeper roots and more plants per square foot.

JULY
SUMMER

THE LAWN
Heat and drought stress

DO
Water deeply instead of daily, about an inch a week in one or two early morning soakings. Mosquito and tick pressure peaks.

SKIP
Heavy nitrogen. It spends reserves tall fescue can't replace until fall.

AUGUST
SUMMER

THE LAWN
Weakest point of the year

DO
Focus on keeping it alive and watch for grub damage, turf that lifts like carpet. Late in the month, schedule aeration and overseeding.

SKIP
Forcing growth. Protect the lawn now and build it in fall.

SEPTEMBER
FALL

KEY DATE
Early September

THE LAWN
Best growing month

DO
Core aerate, overseed and feed. This is the most valuable month, and the first two weeks are the sweet spot.

SKIP
Pre-emergent or weed and feed on new seed. It stops grass seed as well as crabgrass seed.

OCTOBER
FALL

KEY DATE
Mid-October

THE LAWN
Roots growing hard

DO
Keep new seed watered, give the second feeding in mid-October and keep mowing.

SKIP
Seeding late. Mid-October is the practical cutoff, and later seed gives thinner results.

NOVEMBER
FALL

KEY DATE
Early November

THE LAWN
Top growth stops, roots continue

DO
Give the final feeding, make the last mow at 3 inches and remove leaves.

SKIP
Seeding. Soil is below the germination range, so wait for next fall.

DECEMBER
WINTER

THE LAWN
Dormant

DO
Clear leaves and debris.

SKIP
Walking on frozen grass and letting leaves sit. Dormant turf needs almost nothing.

THE ONE JOB THAT MATTERS MOST

FALL AERATION AND OVERSEEDING

Aerate and overseed between **late August and mid-October**, and earlier in that window beats later. The first two weeks of September are the sweet spot, and seed down that early gets eight to ten weeks of root growth before the soil cools. Soil temperature sets the window, so a cool, wet August opens it early and a hot September pushes it back a week.

WINDOW	WHAT IS HAPPENING	WHAT TO DO
LATE AUGUST	Soil warm, nights starting to cool	Book the job and water a dry lawn a day ahead so the aerator pulls full cores.
EARLY SEPTEMBER SWEET SPOT	Best germination conditions of the year	Core aerate and overseed the same day, then apply starter fertilizer.
MID TO LATE SEPTEMBER	Seed germinating, first blades up	Water lightly and often, and keep traffic off the seedbed.
EARLY OCTOBER	Seedlings tillering, roots pushing down	Make the first mow at about 3 inches and start tapering the water.
MID TO LATE OCTOBER	Last usable window	Seed only if you have to and expect thinner results, and give the second fall feeding.
NOVEMBER	Soil below the germination range	It's too late to seed, so give the final feeding, make the last mow and keep leaves cleared.

THE WATERING PLAN FOR NEW SEED

WEEKS 1 TO 3

Lightly and often

Seed sits in the top half inch of soil, so the surface can't dry out. Water lightly and often for two to three weeks.

THEN TAPER

To deep soakings

After two to three weeks, taper to deep soakings. Start tapering the water around the first mow, at about 3 inches.

AFTER THE FIRST MOW

About an inch a week

Give it about an inch a week in one or two early morning soakings.

AFTER SEEDING, WHAT NOT TO DO

- No pre-emergent herbicide or weed and feed until the new grass has been mowed three or four times. It stops grass seed as well as crabgrass seed.
- Hold the first mow until the new grass is about 3 inches tall, and use a sharp blade.
- Keep leaves off the seedbed, since a wet leaf mat smothers seedlings in a week.
- Save the pre-emergent for crabgrass season next spring.

BEFORE THE VISIT, AND WHY CORE

- Mow short, around 2.5 inches, and bag the clippings so seed can reach soil.
- Flag irrigation heads, invisible fence and shallow utility lines.
- Core aeration pulls plugs about the size of a finger. Leave the cores where they land and two or three weeks of rain and mowing melts them back in.
- Aeration and overseeding belong on the same day, because the open holes give seed real soil contact.

SAFE, SIMPLE AND HONEST

KIDS, PETS AND LAWN TREATMENTS

USUALLY ABOUT
2 HOURS

Keep kids and pets off the lawn until it is dry, usually about two hours after an application. Wait until granules have settled into the turf or a liquid has dried onto the leaf, then use the lawn as normal. Allow longer in cool or humid weather.

WHAT DOES DRY MEAN

"Dry" means the product has dried onto the leaf or settled into the soil. Until then, loose product can transfer to a paw or bare foot, and loose granules stay a hazard until rain or watering moves them in.

WEED CONTROL, SAME RULE

Fertilizer is plant nutrition, while weed control is a herbicide. They differ chemically, but the re-entry rule is the same, and dry is the signal to go back out.

ON TREATMENT DAY

1. Move toys, pet bowls and chew items off the lawn before the visit.
2. Keep kids and dogs inside during the application.
3. Wait until the turf is dry to the touch.
4. Check that granules were blown off the driveway, sidewalk and patio.
5. With granular fertilizer, water it in or wait for rain. With a liquid, let it dry first.

WHAT CAUSES MOST PET INCIDENTS

Most pet incidents come from a dog eating granules. The cases that reach a vet almost always involve an open bag, a spill pile or granules nobody swept up.

- Store fertilizer closed and off the garage floor.
- Sweep up spills instead of hosing them into the grass or the street.
- Watch a dog that eats things it shouldn't for the first hour after a visit.
- Call your vet if a dog eats granules, and bring the label.

WHY DRIVEWAYS MATTER

Granules on a driveway are the most concentrated thing a curious dog can find, and a straight path to a storm drain. We blow hard surfaces back into the turf after every application, which matters most where grass meets pavement.

TELL US BEFORE WE TREAT

A play set or trampoline, a vegetable garden or fruit trees, beehives, a fish pond, or a dog that stays out all day. Vegetable beds and hives get buffered or skipped.

WHAT WE USE AND WHO APPLIES IT

Organic based fertilizers

Our fertilizers are organic based and slow release. Slow release nitrogen feeds over roughly 10 to 12 weeks, so less soluble material sits on the surface at once.

EPA registered pesticides

Every pesticide we use is EPA registered and applied at its label rate.

Licensed applicators

Every application is made under a Virginia pesticide business license (#14809) by a VDACS certified applicator (#141054).

We are not a fully organic program

Our fertilizer is organic based, but our weed control is not, and we'd rather say so than market a word. Organic only weed control doesn't reliably handle crabgrass or Japanese stiltgrass in this climate, so we use conventional products at label rates on as few visits as it takes to keep turf dense. If you want a fully organic program, that's a fair choice, but we aren't one.

ABOUT SIMPLY TURF

LOCAL. LICENSED. NO CONTRACTS.

Simply Turf is a small, local business in Gainesville, VA. Patrick Klippen, Owner & CEO, founded it in 2019. He is a VDACS certified applicator with more than 15 years in the green industry. We serve Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William and Fauquier counties, including Gainesville, Haymarket, Bristow, Manassas, Warrenton, Aldie, Ashburn, Leesburg, Centreville, Chantilly, Fairfax, Reston and Herndon.

LOCAL

Our programs are built for Northern Virginia soils and lawns instead of a national franchise calendar.

LICENSED AND INSURED

VDACS certified applicator #141054 and pesticide business license #14809. We carry general liability insurance and will send a certificate of insurance on request.

NO CONTRACTS

There's no contract to sign, and you get a notice before every visit.

PAY PER VISIT

You pay as you go and manage everything online.

FERTILIZATION & WEED CONTROL GUARANTEED

If you're not happy, we keep working until it's right. If you're still not satisfied after our best effort, we refund your most recent fertilization and weed control visit.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

GET YOUR FREE QUOTE AT SIMPLYTURF.COM

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We usually reply within 30 minutes during business hours.

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Simply Turf LLC. VDACS certified applicator #141054. VDACS pesticide business license #14809.