

## Summer Gardening Tips

By: Melinda Sperl

In the heat of the summer, not only are you struggling but your yard is too. Here are some tips you can do to help your lawn and garden survive the heat.

Cut your grass at a higher setting. Longer grass blades mean longer roots on your grass, which will allow your grass to reach for water at lower depths. Make sure your lawnmower blades are sharpened, as dull blades will make for brown tips on grass.

Trim your plants only as necessary. Drastic trimming now will cause drastic growth stressing the plant beyond recovery. Remember the 1/3 rule on this and trim 1/3 now and another 1/3 later.

Insects are rampant now. Look for brown patches in your grass. Now is when we will start seeing chinch bugs or that dreaded sod webworm. I have seen more insects in the garden this year than in the last 5 years. It is very important that you know what you are treating before you do it and it is never a good idea to treat your entire yard just because you see one insect. Also, never buy do-all products like an insecticide/disease control just because you can't diagnose your problem. You can actually feed some funguses when you put an insecticide on it.

Only slow release or organic fertilizers should be applied to lawn and garden right now. I have seen many burned lawns right now from fertilizer applications. It is way too hot for bright green grass. Have patience with your grass for it is really struggling. Especially Bermuda grass as naturally it should go dormant in the heat but we are forcing it, with fertilization, to stay green.

Water is the most important element for plants and grass now. But it is also important not to over water. If you think you have a drainage problem and we have had no rain, you are probably over watering. There is no grass in our area that will benefit from daily watering. That only makes short rooted and unhealthy grass and can actually be harmful to your trees. This same grass will generally also be more prone to insects and disease.

Happy Gardening!

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