

“Ask The Plant Groom”™ by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom(tm)

For: QA1030

We would like to know if it is time to put grub worm killer out on St. Augustine grass in East Texas? What would be the best time to do that? Thanks. - N.F.

With the newer types of products on market today aids to control grubs may be applied in July. This timeframe applies to north, south, west and east Texas.

Visit local retailers for product availability. Always read and follow label directions.

Some 30 years ago, my young son and I dug up a young redbud tree growing near Walnut Creek, which runs through our property in Henderson County. We planted the tree on the west side of our house where it has thrived all these years.

Last year we built an open top deck around the tree and this year after it bloomed, the leaves have black spots on them and are falling constantly. We were careful not to disturb the roots when we built the structure and none of the deck touches the tree trunk. We simply wanted the branches to help shade the area.

Is there anything we can do to prevent the loss of this tree? Thanks. - J. G.

The area of most concern when "construction" will be done or has been completed is a tree's drip line. This area is where moisture and nutrient absorption occurs and the roots receive oxygen.

If the soil is filled or compacted in this area or the roots cut in an excavating process the tree will be impacted negatively. And, in some cases termination of the tree in trouble.

I recommend contacting a Certified Arborist for an on site consultation to determine possible solutions.

We fertilized our yard about mid May with the fertilizer you recommend. Since hot weather is here, it is turning yellow. It did that last year

also. No one in this town can give me any info about it. Someone did recommend last year putting iron on it, so we applied it like the directions said to. That did not do one bit of good. It gets plenty of water. The yard has some Bermuda grass mixed in with the St. Augustine and it is real green. We have never had a problem with yellow grass when we lived in Brownwood, just here in the country at Zephyr. Can you help me?

Thanks. - D. G.

I went to one of the best tuft grass experts in the nation on this, James McAfee, PhD, Associate Professor and Extension Turfgrass Specialist with Texas Cooperative Extension. Jim's response to my request follows.

"If the chlorosis, yellowing, is due to iron deficiency, then it may take several treatments of iron to correct the problem. Also, what source of iron did you use when treating your lawn? Some of the granular products are not as effective on our heavy clay soils as the liquid sources of iron.

Secondly, not all chlorosis is due to an iron deficiency problem. According to Dr. Phil Colbaugh, our research plant pathologist, yellowing can often be a sign of initial Take-ALL Root Rot activity.

Check the root system on the stolons (runners) and see if the roots are white (healthy) or if they are short and dark brown to black in color. If the majority of the roots are dark brown to black in color, this is a good sign that you may have some Take-All Root Rot activity. If so, then one of the better treatments is to topdress the yellow areas in the lawn with sphagnum peat moss at one bale of peat moss per 1,000 sq. ft."

Note: This same answer will apply to all areas in Texas where highly alkaline soils naturally occur. Most but not all soils west of IH-45 are alkaline.

Since we are "talking" lawns, just an earlier reminder here - do not forget to fertilize Texas lawns in September. Have a soil test done now to determine the ideal fertilizer for your lawn. To receive a free Soil Test Kit send your request and include a self addressed long envelope to: Dale Groom, Soil Test Kit, 10056 Marsh Lane, Suite B-101, Dallas, TX 75229.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist-Dallas County, Author, Columnist, Radio/TV Host is also known statewide as The Plant Groom™. Send your lawn, garden and landscape questions to Dale Groom at dalegroom@mycvc.net

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