

Event: Scioto River Day
Educational Session:
Date: No Education Session!
Time:
Volunteer Project: Scioto River Day
Location: Scioto Park
Date: August 16, 2008
Time: 10:00am to 2:00pm,

Alex Rozanski, the City's, contract specialist and guest Green Team speaker this past spring, agreed to write this months newsletter.

How does your lawn help the natural environment? Your lawn improves the air you breathe by removing carbon dioxide while supplying oxygen. Your lawn stabilizes dust, and removes allergens. Your lawn is wonderful at cleaning run-off and promoting ground water recharge. Many scientists agree that the world's greatest soils are those that developed from grasses (Think the Great Plains, or the tall-grass prairie). Your lawn is also a tremendous habitat for all sorts of creatures from microscopic nematodes to earthworms to birds to mammals such as moles (or the family dog). We rely on turfgrass more than you realize. It increases your home's value. It provides a safe surface for you and your children to play on. It cools the air. I could go on an on. Renowned Ohio State researcher Parwinder Grewal describes turfgrass as a "bandage for the earth." I like to think of it as our "default" groundcover. The healthier your turfgrass lawn is, the better it accomplishes these demanding tasks.

Cooler than normal spring temperatures along with a steady supply of precipitation has provided for near ideal growing conditions for turfgrass this past spring and early summer. Mowing at least twice a week has been the norm for my lawn since April. Summer is usually the least healthy period for our "cool-season" Ohio turfgrasses like Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, or tall fescue. If your lawn's growth slows and begins to brown out, think first before breaking out the sprinkler or applying a round of fertilizer. Just because your turf is brown, does not mean it is dead. It is most likely dormant. Dormancy is a grass's natural defense against stress. Just as your perennial flowers store energy over the winter only to emerge perfectly healthy in the spring and summer, your "perennial" turfgrass lawn is waiting for cooler, wetter fall weather to start growing again.

If you don't mind brown grass, just let it go dormant. You still need to monitor your lawn though. Every so often, randomly tug on the surface around your lawn. If the grass easily breaks off, you might have a bluegrass billbug problem or other insect damage. An insecticide labeled for your particular problem might be in order. If you're not the pesticide type, just wait for cooler weather. You'll notice then if you had a problem or not when the affected area doesn't green back up. You're in luck though. Now through September is the perfect time to re-seed. Our turfgrasses can't survive drought though. So some water is necessary for survival. Recommendations differ a little, but on average turf needs about an inch of water every 4-6 weeks to "survive."

On the other hand, if you don't mind the hassle of lugging around the garden hose or if you have a fancy in-ground irrigation system, and don't mind the high water bills, go for it. But once you start, don't stop watering. Your turf needs at least an inch per week to stay out of dormancy. Allowing your lawn to go in and out of a dormant state stresses it more than a prolonged state of dormancy.

Avoid applying any fertilizer during the hottest and driest part of summer. Dormant grass can't use it and could be "burned" from the fertilizer laying there and not being broken down. Irrigated grass just wants to survive and isn't interested in growing. Be patient and wait for the fall. September through November is when your lawn wants fed the most. I usually apply my last round of fertilizer the weekend after Thanksgiving. This is what many turfgrass scientists consider the most important feeding. It leads to longer winter color, a quicker spring green-up, longer spring growing time and a healthier turf heading into next summer's stress period.

Remember, the healthier your lawn is the better it can improve our natural environment, and defend itself against pests, causing you to use less pesticides. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the other turfgrass professionals at City of Dublin Parks and Open Space. Our number is 614-410-4700.

In the case of bad weather, please call 410-4730. I'll leave a message concerning cancellation of the clean up.

Thanks, I look forward to the event.