**Primetime**

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**Lawn Repair and Tree Planting**

Before you launch a major lawn renovation project keep in mind that we are still in drought restrictions without any solid indications that we may start receiving normal rainfall anytime soon.

Rather than applying massive amounts of new sod consider waiting to see what happens this spring. Lawn grass will surprise you. A drought ravished plot will often fill in quickly with the cool weather and reasonable application of water through rainfall or irrigation. Here are some other options.

Instead of resodding everything, consider aerating and adding some compost as top dressing.

Reseeding the lawn isn’t necessarily an option either. Bermuda grass and buffalo grass require hot weather to germinate and develop. It is too late to seed them.

It is not recommended that rye or fescue be over-seeded on a permanent St. Augustine, Bermuda, zoysia, or buffalo lawn but it can be seeded to provide an emergency winter cover over bare ground where there is a danger of erosion or where mud can be a problem. Dog runs may be such an area where some emergency sodding is called for despite the potential for drought. Unlike seeded grass, sod provides some instant cover.

There is still time to apply a winterizer fertilizer to a lawn that made it through the summer drought in fairly good shape. As long as your lawn is still green it will be able to uptake winterizer fertilizer and benefit with increased winter cold tolerance and with a faster green-up in spring. If your lawn declined this summer due to the extreme drought conditions, it may be the year to fertilize with an organic fertilizer. They only offer 4 to 6 percent nitrogen (first number) and it is all in a slow release form. It takes an active growing lawn to take advantage of the high nitrogen fast release form provided in the winterizer formulas such as 18-6-12.

Even if it is probably not the best year to be planting a new lawn there is some planting that is reasonable. November is the best month of the year to plant trees and shrubs. The roots have a chance to develop before the summer heat puts the plant to the test. CPS Energy is also offering its $50 rebate for selected tree species if they are planted to shade the house and reduce air conditioning needs. All of the most desirable shade trees are on the list including live oak, Mexican white oak, cedar elm, Mexican sycamore, anaqua, chinquapin oak, bur oak, Texas red oak, and shumard oak. If you buy a shumard oak it must have been grown from a alkaline soil seed source if it is going to survive in our soil.

Visit the CPS Energy website at [www.cpsenergy.com](http://www.cpsenergy.com) for more information on the rebate. Many of the neighborhood nurseries also have the application and instructions.

I have always recommended that trees be fertilized in the spring but available research indicates it may be just as valuable to provide the nutrients in the fall. If you choose to fertilize trees now apply one cup of winterizer fertilizer for every inch of diameter, spread it over the drip line. Spread it as thin as possible so the lawn in that area does not become overwhelmed.

Spread wildflower seed now for spring flowers. The site needs to have some bare soil so that the seed can make contact with the soil. Purchase seed from your favorite nursery or go online to [www.wildseedfarms.com](http://www.wildseedfarms.com) or one of the other online sources. They ship high quality seed quickly. The website is also a great source of information on the large number of wildflowers that are available.