



September Lawn & Garden Tips

Steve Marier, a Hugo native and the manager of Hugo Feed Mill and Hardware has been helping local residents for over 30 years with lawn and garden advice and solutions.

September brings in cooler temperatures and rainfall, providing ideal weather for harvesting the last of the vegetable garden and completing lawn care projects. Now is the perfect time to invest in your lawn for excellent results next spring.

LAWN CARE

WEED CONTROL: Fall is a great time to spray for broadleaf weeds like Creeping Charlie. Apply products such as SpeedZone or Weed Free Zone. Fall conditions are prime for products, allowing optimal absorption and effectiveness, resulting in fewer pesky weeds to target next spring.

It is too late to spray for crabgrass. Since it's an annual grass, it's already going away on its own. Make a map highlighting where the crabgrass was so you can apply a pre-emergent next spring. We offer a pre-emergent crabgrass control without any fertilizer. This way, it only gets applied where the crabgrass is an issue.

SEEDING: There is still time to seed new lawns, overseed, or patch bare spots, but you want to be done by September 20th. Sod can be laid now or later in the fall. Longer, cooler nights and more expected rain gives grass seedlings a better chance at establishing before winter. If you're seeding a large area, consider renting our Hydro-seeder for optimal results with less effort. Prior to seeding or sodding, remember to apply our 10-10-20 as a starter fertilizer.

By mid-October, you can start seeding again with what we call dormant seeding. As it's not warm enough, the seeds will wait to germinate until spring. With dormant seeding, a pre-emergent crabgrass preventer cannot be applied in the spring because the grass is not fully established.

FERTILIZER: Whether you apply one, two, or three applications per year, the University of Minnesota Extension's home lawn fertility programs recommend a fall application around Labor Day through the end of September. Apply your fall fertilizer at a rate of one pound

of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. We recommend the Hugo Feed Mill brand, 25-0-15, with 50% slow-release nitrogen for a longer feeding period.

CORE AERATION: There is still time to core aerate this fall if you haven't done it yet. Reasons to consider core aeration, include soil compaction, clay issues, or if you have a lot of thatch.

MOWING: Time to drop the height of your mower. Lower the cutting height of your lawn mower to 2 1/2-3 inches tall with regular mowing. Keep it here for fall with a gradual decrease to 2-2 1/2 inches over the last two or three mowings of the year. Lowering the height again right before winter will help with leaf removal and reduce the chance of snow mold in the spring.

GARDEN

EXTEND YOUR HARVEST: Minnesota usually gets a frost of cold at the end of September. I bring my pots inside for a few days. This short time inside extends my pepper harvest into November. I also cover my garden to get by on a few of those cold nights. Most often, it warms up after a few chilly days or a week of cold nights.

ONCE THE GARDEN IS DONE: Remove all diseased plants and vegetation from the garden. Don't compost them because it will not get hot enough to kill any disease from the plants. If that compost is reused, you're spreading the disease back to your garden to emerge in the spring. For those interested in planting garlic, mid-October is great timing.

PLAN YOUR GARDEN FOR NEXT YEAR: To help plan your garden for next year, make notes from this season — the good, the bad, and the ugly. I strongly recommend taking soil samples now. Normally, samples sent in mid-April/May take roughly three to four weeks to get the results. The results come faster this time of year, which allows you ample time to plan next year's garden.

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When you're done harvesting, you can plant some rye grain as a cover crop. The rye will come up now, and it will grow more in the spring. You can then till it under for a green manure to add organic nutrients to the soil.

Tell Hugo Feed Mill how your lawn and garden care went these last few months. We want to make sure our recommendations are useful for and customized to the community. Just stop in, or give us a call!

