

# BEAUTY AND ORDER

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## Turf dilemmas

After a couple of calls this fall about our lawn program (specifically fertilizer applications in September), I thought it may be a good topic for this month — for plant health nerds anyway.



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Most important is to note that Kansas State University recommends an average fescue residential lawn receive at least 4 lbs. of nitrogen (N) per year/1,000 sq. ft., for adequate health and color.

This means if you were applying a 10-10-10 fertilizer on a 10,000-sq. ft. lawn, you would need to put down 100 lbs. of product to get one 1 lb. of N per 1,000 sq. feet. (10 lbs. N/100 lbs. of product x 1lb N/1,000 sq. ft. x 10,000 sq. ft. )

Following this line, if you then want 4 lbs. of N per year, you would need to make four applications per season. That is straight-forward enough, but the question is when those four applications are best applied, and there is the dilemma.

We have elected to apply quick release N on our first round along with the spring pre-emergent (Feb./March), followed by a slow release form in May; another slow release in June/July and a final fast release source in November (“winterizer”).

The rub is that some research recommends a September application of fertilizer. However, this



Photo by Randy James

Here is a fertilizer program test plot: otherwise know as Randy's lawn.

conflicts with our Sept./Oct. liquid broadleaf round that we have found provides the best weed control and least off-target damage for spring weeds.

So what is one to do? Weeds or color?

After nearly 20 years in business, we have concluded that our high grade sources of N have resulted in a negligible difference in color without the September application, but one weed, especially a dandelion, is enough to ruin an otherwise nice lawn; so weed control wins out in our book!

**For more information about Growing Concerns and our residential landscape management services, visit our website at [www.growingconcerns.com](http://www.growingconcerns.com)**

That said, the nice thing about being a small local company is we are very nimble, so if color is king and you have green envy for another lawn on your block, we can add or swap any application at any time.

However, also being a management vs. maintenance company, we may have already noticed and made the swap anyway.

So throw this whole discourse in the trash and get back to more important things.



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