

Timely Tips for September

Tip of The Month

Balance is everything in a garden. Wiping out all the pests is not a realist or even a desirable goal. Without aphids, lady beetles would starve. If we don't share the leaves of our plants with caterpillars, we would not experience the joy of watching butterflies. Without fungi or bacteria nothing would breakdown to recycle back into the system. Everything has its place and purpose. Select plants that are resistant to known pests, keep them healthy (stressed plants are more vulnerable to pest problems), tolerate a little "damage", and marvel at the many tiny and grand "battles" of nature keeping your yard in balance.

Climate Information for September in Phoenix, Arizona

Rainfall

Average: 0.86 inches

Record: 5.5 inches (1939)

Temperature (degrees F)

Average High: 98.3 degrees

Lowest High: 66 degrees (1895)

Record High: 116 degrees (1950)

Average Low: 72.8 degrees

Highest Low: 90 degrees (1982, 1983)

Record Low: 63 degrees (1895, 1965)

Note: Rainfall and temperatures vary widely within the valley depending upon elevation and microclimate.

To Do List - FALL OVERSEEDING - Warm season grasses will go dormant and turn brown when soil temperatures fall below 60° F, but you can enjoy a green lawn during the winter months by overseeding with perennial ryegrass seed. Perennial ryegrass is preferred to annual ryegrass for winter color because its blade is darker green, hardier, finer, and easier to mow. Temperatures should be reaching the mid-sixties at night on a consistent basis for good overseeding weather. This usually occurs between mid-Oct. through mid-Nov. Do not overseed a bermuda lawn unless it has been established for at least three months. Overseeding is not recommended for St. Augustine. On Zoysia, use half the recommended seeding rate. Quick tips listed below.

- Do not fertilize for 4-6 weeks before overseeding.
- Grow lawn longer for 2 weeks prior to overseeding (prior to scalping).
- De-thatch lawn lightly. Set verticutter so the blades go ¼" above the soil. Go in two directions. Do not "dig" into the soil. Rake and remove thatch.
- Scalp down lawn. If you are using a reel mower, to ¼" to ½". With a rotary mower, ¾" is acceptable.
- Apply 10-15 lbs. of seed per 1000 sq. ft. Apply starter fertilizer with seed.
- Rake or drag to ensure seed makes contact with soil.
- Lightly cover the seed with no more than ¼" of weed and salt-free organic mulch.
- Keep seeds damp by watering 3-4 times per day with light 5-7 minute durations. After germination (7-10 days), reduce watering as needed. This is dependent upon the type of sprinkler head, temperature, wind, and rain, and may vary from once every two weeks to every other day. Only water enough to avoid wilt between watering.
- When 2" tall (about 2 weeks), mow the ryegrass. Mow no more than 1/3 of the blade at each mowing using a sharp mower blade. Allow seed to become established before closer mowing.
- Two weeks after planting, fertilize lawn using a balanced fertilizer.
- Fertilize monthly. Apply iron and calcium nitrate at least once before frost occurs.
- Enjoy!!!