

CENTIPEDEGRASS LAWN MAINTENANCE GUIDE

DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

Fertilization

DO NOT fertilize centipedegrass at this time. Submit soil samples for analysis every 3 years to determine nutrient requirements. Be sure to specify centipedegrass. (Contact your county Extension Center for details.) Apply lime or sulfur if suggested (based on soil test) to raise or reduce soil pH respectively. DO NOT lime centipedegrass unless recommended by soil test.

Irrigation

Water to prevent excessive dehydration.

Mowing

Remove lawn debris (rocks, sticks, and leaves). Do not burn off centipedegrass to remove excessive debris because of possible injury to the grass and potential fire hazard.

Weed Control

Apply broadleaf herbicides as necessary for control of chickweed, henbit, etc. Centipedegrass is sensitive to certain herbicides (e.g., 2,4-D), so follow label directions for reducing rates, and use with caution. Selected herbicides (e.g., atrazine or simazine) can be applied in November or December for control of annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) and several winter annual broadleaf weeds.

MARCH - MAY

Fertilization

DO NOT apply nitrogen at this time. Yellow appearance may be an indication of iron deficiency. Spray iron (ferrous) sulfate (2 ounces in water per 1,000 sq. ft.) or a chelated iron source to enhance color as needed. Follow label directions.

Insect Control

Check for white grubs and control if necessary.

Irrigation

Water to prevent drought stress. About 1 inch of water per application each week is needed for growing centipedegrass. Sandy soils often require more frequent watering; i.e., ½ inch of water every third day. Proper irrigation may prevent or reduce pest and nonpest problems from occurring later in the summer.

Mowing

Mow lawn at 1 inch at time of initial greenup. Mow before grass gets above 1 ½ inches tall. Do not burn off centipedegrass to remove excessive debris because of possible injury to the lawn and potential fire hazard.

Renovation

Replant large bare areas in May using seed (¼ to ½ pound per 1,000 sq. ft.) or sprigs (¾ bushel per 1,000 sq. ft.). Mixing seed with 2 gallons of fine sand per 1,000 sq. ft. will aid in distribution. Germination is expected in 28 days but establishment is slow. Keep seedbed continually moist with light, frequent sprinklings several times a day to ensure good germination. Three years for complete establishment of a new lawn is not uncommon.

Thatch Removal

Power rake (vertical mow) to remove thatch (layer of undecayed grass) in late May if necessary. A 2- or 3-inch blade spacing set ¼-inch deep in one direction works best. Do not use a power rake with a 1-inch blade spacing as severe turf injury may result.

Weed Control

Apply preemergence herbicides to control crabgrass, goosegrass, and foxtail. Apply by the time that dogwoods are in full bloom. Apply postemergence herbicides in May as needed for control of summer annual and perennial broadleaf weeds such as knotweed, spurge, lespedeza, etc. Do not apply until 3 weeks after greenup. Centipedegrass is sensitive to certain herbicides (e.g. 2,4-D), so follow label directions and use with caution.

JUNE - AUGUST

Disease Control

Have soil assayed if nematode damage is suspected. Contact your county Extension Center for assistance.

Fertilization

Fertilize with ½ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. (once a year) in mid-June using a high potassium fertilizer (e.g., 5-5-15, 6-6-12, 8-8-24). An additional fertilization in August may enhance performance in coastal locations. Fertilizers without phosphorus (e.g., 15-0-14, 8-0-24) are preferred if soils exhibit moderate-to-high levels of phosphorus. Yellow appearance may indicate an iron deficiency. Spray iron (ferrous) sulfate (2 ounces in water per 1,000 sq. ft.) or a chelated iron source to enhance color as needed. Follow label directions. To determine amount of product required to apply ½ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft., divide 50 by the FIRST number on the fertilizer bag. Example: A 5-5-15 fertilizer. Dividing 50 by 5 = 10 pounds of product to be applied per 1,000 sq. ft. for ½ pound of nitrogen.

Insect Control

Check for white grubs and control if necessary.

Irrigation

Water to prevent drought stress. About 1 inch of water per application each week is needed for growing centipedegrass. Sandy soils often require more frequent watering; i.e., 1/2 inch of water every third day.

Mowing

Mow lawn at 1 inch. Mow before grass gets above 1 ½ inches tall.

Weed Control

Apply postemergence herbicides as needed for control of summer annual and perennial broadleaf weeds, such as knotweed, spurge, lespezeza, etc. Centipedegrass is sensitive to certain herbicides (e.g., 2,4-D, MSMA), so follow label directions and use with caution. Do not apply herbicides unless grass and weeds are actively growing and lawn is not suffering from drought stress.

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

Fertilization

Fertilize with 1 pound of potash (K₂O) per 1,000 sq. ft. 4 to 6 weeks before expected frost using 1.6 pounds of muriate of potash (0-0-60) or 2 pounds of potassium sulfate (0-0-50). DO NOT lime centipedegrass unless recommended by soil test. To determine amount of product required to apply 1 pound of potash per 1,000 sq. ft., divide 100 by the THIRD number on the fertilizer bag. Example: A 6-6-12 fertilizer. Dividing 100 by 12 = 8.3 pounds of product to be applied per 1,000 sq. ft. for 1 pound of potassium.

Insect Control

Check for white grubs and control if necessary.

Irrigation

Water to prevent drought stress. About 1 inch of water per application each week is sufficient for growing centipedegrass. Sandy soils often require more frequent watering; i.e., ½ inch of water every third day. Water following onset of dormancy (browning of foliage) if needed to prevent excessive dehydration.

Mowing

Mow lawn at 1 inch. Mow before grass gets above 1 ½ inches tall. Raise mowing height to 1 ½ inches several weeks before expected frost.