

# BULLETIN BOARD

## GREEN INFORMANT SPECIALS

### Turf Repair

Do you have some stressed areas from the summer heat this year that did not survive? Lawn Tech can help repair those areas this fall so your lawn is ready to go next spring. Mention this ad from our newsletter and we will deduct \$15.00 from your bill. Basic repair starts around \$235.00 for a 500 sq. ft. area.

### Holidays are Here...

Holiday wreaths and holiday lighting are available from Lawn Tech. Wreaths start at \$49.00 and lighting packages start at \$500 for the first year. Please call our office and ask for Curt or visit our website for more information and options.



P.O. Box 190  
Grand Ledge, MI 48837



**Specialists in Turfgrass  
and Landscape Design  
Since 1971**

Specializing in the following services:

Fertilizing • Weed Control • Aerating and Seeding • Mole Baiting • Fungus/Insect Control • Landscape Design/Installation • Lawn Installation and Renovation • Water Features • Retaining Walls • Concrete Paver and Flagstone Patios • Outdoor Lighting • Mowing Service • Tree and Shrub Care • Vegetation Management • Mulching/Topping of Landscape Beds • Perimeter Pest Control • Snow Removal and Deicing • Holiday Lighting

### Contact us!

**Lawn Tech**  
P.O. Box 190 • Grand Ledge, MI 48837  
(517) 627-9669 • (517) 626-2645 FAX  
www.lawntechofmi.com

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#### Proud Members Of:



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Since 1971

Fall 2011

# THE GREEN INFORMANT

**Specialists in Turfgrass and Landscape Design  
Commercial and Residential ■ State Certified Technicians**

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## FALLING INTO AUTUMN

### ARE YOU A WINNER?

Lawn Tech is awarding our loyal customers by offering a *Customer Loyalty Giveaway*. In each quarterly newsletter, look for your customer number in the prize box. If your customer number is posted you could win a Holiday Wreath from Lawn Tech!

If your customer number is listed, call our office to confirm and your name will be entered into the drawing. Each drawing will have a deadline to call by, so be sure to read every issue.

*Congratulations to Tim & Ann Vogelsange of Haslett for winning the summer giveaway of 100 tulip bulbs planted by Lawn Tech!*

#### 2011 CUSTOMER GIVEAWAYS

Winter 2011

Round #1 Early Spring Service

Spring 2011

Lawn Tech Cooler Packed With Summertime Enjoyment

Summer 2011

100 Tulip Bulbs Planted by Lawn Tech

Fall 2011

Holiday Wreath

#### IN THIS ISSUE . . .

- Lawn Recovery
- Velvet Galls
- G.I. Specials Board
- Turf Tips

**W**rapping up the year for Lawn Tech typically means come late-August, we are strategizing our game plan for services for the upcoming fall, winter and even spring of the next year.

We assess what has happened in the current year, both positive and negative. Obviously this can be a long list either way. So, to name just a few: rainfall was both positive throughout the year and darn right negative at times as well; warm weather we all await in spring was not so wanted in July; and as a result of this combination, the grass grew at a rapid pace, which makes the turf lush and green, but not so fun to mow!

Aside from the obvious we just covered, there were some new discoveries this year in the world of lawn and landscape. A new commercially-available herbicide caused damage to pine trees (LAWN TECH DOES NOT USE THE IMPRELLIS HERBICIDE); some scientific discoveries of pine tree decline were detected; and the discovery of what has been termed "Super Mosquitos". These articles can be found on our website, as well as some in this newsletter issue, or go to <http://news.msue.msu.edu/> and click on the Turf & landscape link.

In 2012, the state-wide Phosphorus ban will take effect, making it illegal to apply phosphorus. This will be a self-policing type ban monitored by homeowners and professional companies. A soil test will be the only tool that can be used to justify such an

application of the phosphorus nutrient. Lawn care companies in particular will be in the limelight with this one. Lawn Tech removed the phosphorus nutrient from our fertilizers well over 5 years ago. Also, note that blowing off granular applications from impervious surfaces is one way to alleviate run off. Lawn Tech has been proactive with this measure as well.

Lawn Tech will be renewing many seasonal contracts this fall. Fall clean ups, snow removal, mowing for 2012 as well as prepay opportunities for your weed and feed program for 2012. So please be sure to review all communication.

The challenges of surviving in this market have always been before us and will continue to be here for many years to come. The Lawn Tech staff and I are grateful for your patronage and we again hope this 2011 season we have met or exceeded your expectations. If there is ever a concern, question or compliment, please do not hesitate to contact us.

In closing, as this newsletter reaches you the leaves will be turning, the cooler weather will have arrived, the mums will be blossoming and the football season will be upon us! Let's enjoy this time together!

See you on the turf!

*Dan Boak*

Dan Boak  
President



# TURF TIPS

## MICHIGAN'S PHOSPHORUS FERTILIZER BAN

26th April, 2011 - Tony Groves, Pam Tynning, Paul Hausler - Progressive AE

Phosphorus is the nutrient that most often stimulates excessive growth of aquatic plants, leading to a variety of problems known collectively as eutrophication. Elevated phosphorus levels are causing premature aging of many Michigan lakes.

In an attempt to address this problem, Michigan passed legislation several years ago that limited the phosphorus content of laundry detergents and more recently extended the ban to dishwasher detergents. However, phosphorus in fertilizers remained a problem. Phosphorus is a key ingredient in many commercial lawn fertilizers and is commonly applied at rates well in excess of what is needed to maintain a healthy lawn. Excess phosphorus can run off into lakes and streams where a single pound of phosphorus can generate hundreds of pounds of aquatic vegetation.

With the passage of a new state law (PA 299 of 2010), Michigan has joined a number of other Great Lakes states in banning phosphorus in lawn fertilizers. The new law, which takes effect on January 1, 2012, will prohibit the application of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus unless a new lawn is being established (and phosphorus is needed to promote root growth) or if a soil test indicates a soil phosphorus deficiency. The new law also regulates the application of lawn fertilizer near surface waters and prohibits lawn fertilizer applications on frozen ground or ground saturated with water.

Under the new law, fertilizer containing phosphorus can be applied on golf courses operated by staff members that have been certified by the Department of Agriculture as having completed training on best management practices for the proper use of phosphorus fertilizers. Agricultural fertilizer applications are exempt from regulation under the new law. Communities with existing phosphorus fertilizer regulations in effect prior to the enactment of the state mandate will be allowed to maintain their local regulations if they so choose. The state may impose civil or administrative fines on violators of the new law.

### THE MINNESOTA EXPERIENCE

Minnesota was the first state to enact a phosphorus fertilizer law. Between 2002 and 2005, Minnesota phased

in a state-wide phosphorus fertilizer ban similar to Michigan's new law. In enacting the law, the Minnesota legislature required that research be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the fertilizer restrictions. The research culminated in a report entitled Effectiveness of the Minnesota Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law. Report findings indicate the following:

- Phosphorus-free lawn fertilizers are readily available, thus there is no difficulty for homeowners to find a lake-safe alternative.
- The law has substantially reduced phosphorus lawn fertilizer use.
- Consumers are supportive of the law.
- The law has not increased consumer costs.

Additional studies are underway in Minnesota to document water quality improvements that have resulted from the law.

### WATER QUALITY BENEFITS

It is anticipated Michigan's fertilizer law will result in significant water quality benefits. While it will likely take many years to document water quality improvements in Michigan's lakes and streams, a recent study conducted on the Huron River found that total phosphorus levels in the river dropped about 28% following a phosphorus fertilizer ban enacted by the City of Ann Arbor. In this report, it was noted that the phosphorus fertilizer ban was accompanied by a number of additional initiatives (such as programs to promote shoreline vegetative buffers) and it was not possible to single out the phosphorus fertilizer ban as the sole reason for the measured decline in river phosphorus levels. However, these initial results are encouraging.

One of the challenges in evaluating the impact of the new phosphorus law on water quality will be to design sampling protocols and programs that can differentiate between natural variability and actual trends in water quality. While additional studies over several years will be required to document the impact of Michigan's phosphorus fertilizer law, the law is certainly a positive step toward protecting water quality.

## LAWNS AND OTHER TURF RECOVERING FROM STRESSFUL JULY

Published August 12, 2011 — Kevin Frank, MSU Extension, Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences

The record-breaking heat has taken a toll on many turf areas, causing crabgrass and weeds. Here are some tips in helping your turf recover and prepare for fall.

The cooler temperatures the last week have certainly been welcome relief from the record heat and humidity of July. Many turf areas across the state including home lawns, golf courses, athletic fields and commercial properties have turf that is looking less than stellar following the heat of the last month.

Earlier this year, many thought that with very cool temperatures of spring and early summer that it might be a down year for crabgrass. Well, not surprisingly, once the heat surged in July the crabgrass let it be known that it would not be denied another bountiful summer of growth and prosperity. In addition to crabgrass, the voids in turf have resulted in numerous other weeds finding homes including black medic, oxalis, dandelion, white clover, birdsfoot trefoil, yellow nutsedge, chicory and Canada thistle. In addition, I've also been noticing that my new white sneakers have been sporting a nice, brownish-orange look after walking through areas where rust is starting to infest the turf.

The 10-day forecast looks like temperatures are going to stay moderate with highs in the 70s and low 80s and, more importantly, nighttime temperatures in the 60s.

These temperatures will spur turfgrass growth and recovery from the summer stress.

A couple tips to help your turf recover and compete with weeds for what's left of summer as we move into fall.

- If your lawn is looking weak, now would be the time to consider a fertilizer application to ensure the turf has the nutrition it needs to recover and grow into the fall.
- Sharpen the mower blades. It's been a long season of mowing, so sharpen the blades now before entering the fall mowing season. A sharp blade results in a cleaner cut that helps the turf heal quicker than a ragged cut.
- If the turf has been infested with crabgrass, a herbicide application to check it may be worth your while as this will allow the turf to compete better as we move into fall.
- For broadleaf weed problems, the most effective herbicide applications will be applied in late September or early October.

## VELVET GALLS CAUSED BY TINY ERIOPHYID MITES

Published July 5, 2011 — Bob Bricault, MSU Extension

In the last couple of weeks, strange growths on birch, elm, linden and maple leaves have been observed in southern Michigan. For silver maples, this is a very common occurrence in Michigan. The colorful, felt-like patches are not the result of a fungus, but are caused by the feeding of a tiny creature called an eriophyid mite. This type of mite is less than 1/100 of an inch, cigar-shaped, and though it is related to spiders and spider mites (which have eight legs); the eriophyid mite has only two pairs of legs. Because the tiny mite is hard to observe except under magnification, it is usually identified by the strange growth response it causes on the host plant.

Different species of eriophyid mites create a variety of abnormal growths on leaves and flowers. The velvet eriophyid gall mite creates the reddish-patch called an erinea, which is most commonly found on silver maples.

The adult mite survives the winter on the tree by finding shelter under bark scales and buds. The adults migrate to

buds in the spring and begin to feed and lay eggs on the leaves. The mites feed by sucking the cellular content of the leaves. The feeding causes deformed growth on leaves that appear as rounded velvet patches. These growths or galls that form surround the mite, providing protection as it feeds and reproduces. The plants response is an attempt to wall off attack from the mites.

The deformed appearance of the leaves often creates anxiety in homeowners that believe their trees and shrubs are being harmed. The resulting growth that forms is not considered harmful to the tree or shrub's health. High populations of the eriophyid mite may cause some leaf drop, but most leaves remain on the tree and continue to function. Since there is very little damage to the tree, no pesticide treatments are recommended.

Once the galls have formed, pesticide treatments would not eliminate them. If pesticide treatments are used, they would be directed at adult mites as they move to buds to feed and lay eggs in early spring.

## LAWN TECH PRIZE BOX

If your customer number is posted, call our office by November 30, 2011 to be entered into the drawing for a Christmas Holiday Wreath! Customer numbers:

11146	5133	3187	5206	4703	5264	17112	3382	5674	2885	5470	7177	3820	3403
6252	2920	4344	5070	4070	11524	17249	2448	2063	5219	5494	17138	4072	17271
3594	3540	17218	2510	4187	17110	4532	1165	5953	1696	4624	5203	2309	4233
1679	3259	4611	2743	2457	1175	5563	1243	11493	4953	6346	4173	2526	3790
3847	6253	11432	4273	4702	11431	3943	4286	2899	6301	5134	11157	17142	4796
11469	6184	4045	17185	3124	4264	4835	11394	5655	5978	11308	17258	17133	11513