

VOICE OF QUALITY

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2020



Owned & Operated by
Jeff & Debra Melmer

10 plants that are natural mosquito repellents:

Citronella

Citronella Grass

Lemon Balm

Marigolds

Catnip

Lavender

Lemon Verbena

Creeping Lemon Thyme

Basil

Rosemary

Most Herbs are natural Mosquito repellents

A NEW DAY AND TIME

Back in the beginning of March I was not sure if it came in like a lion or like a lamb. At that point in time we had no idea what was about to happen. On or about March 11th our world as we knew it came to a screaming halt! Covid 19 had arrived, so I am going to say that was a lion! This unprecedented event changed all that we do for the foreseeable future. Many had to shelter in place and some of us were deemed "essential" (fortunately we fell into that category). For us it was sort of business as usual, sort of! Certainly now, and possibly going forward, will lead our lives differently.

I have never seen so many of my neighbors out walking or exercising with their families. I hope that as our lives progress past this event that we all look at our world and continue to think more of our health and also continue our extra efforts to get and stay healthy. Maybe even looking at slowing our lives down, to enjoy and appreciate what we have around us a lot more.

We have noticed a lot of you are more involved in your landscape. This is very refreshing for us as I do not ever remember a time that I / we have ever made contact with so many of our customers, primarily because you are all home. It is much easier to explain or discuss an issue versus a phone call or an email / text.

I hope we can continue to express our gratitude to all around us as it is a much nicer world when we are all kind to each other.

Now back to March, March and through most of April we were on average 10 degrees above normal temperatures. Along with no measurable rain fall our turf as usual began to show signs of stress. This became very frustrating as March is our granular turf fertilizer month and we hope to see our grass flush full and green.

This is where our irrigation systems start to do their job. This is also were we find all of our irrigation system deficiencies. Turf is what always requires more frequent irrigation. In some cases, we may need to add a day

to our irrigation cycle. You may want to isolate zones to run an extra day or in some cases an afternoon cool down around 3 or 4 PM. The afternoon cool down is just adding hydration to resolve stress and help mitigate damage from heat stress.

There also can be underlying conditions that affect the root system which hinders the plants ability to pick up and distribute moisture throughout the plant.

As we look at April, we saw similar conditions with the exception that we did see some measurable rainfall. One problem that we came across in April is when we actually received some rainfall many people turned off the irrigation clocks. Then a few days later we received phone calls of brown or dying areas in the grass. Upon our inspections we found the clocks in the off position so the rainfall we did receive became negligible as we did not take advantage of the rain. Many of you do not follow our weather but to keep you in the loop in our area we are in a 7.5" to 8" deficit. If you could imagine that you spread this rain over a 6 to 8 week time frame that we might not be looking at all the heat stress issues in our grass today. So please do not shut your clock off until our rainy season gets here or make sure your rain sensor is functioning so when it does rain, we benefit from the rain.

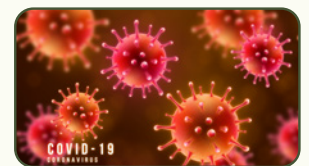
May has become a challenging month especially due to the heat and no rain or humidity. This is our sod web worm prevention treatment month. This saves us all a great deal of stress as sod web worm feeding can be relentless and very damaging. We get a lot of phone calls about the moths in our yards. Trust me when we tell you that there is absolutely nothing, we can do to prevent the moths. Expect to see moths from now until late August or into September. Although we appreciate the calls it is unfortunately impossible to control a flying insect that can fly long distances and control the flight. Being primarily a night creature all moths will gather in shady cool area during the day.

I hope this letter finds you all well and healthy. Be safe and have a great summer.

PANDEMIC

While there is nothing good resulting from the Pandemic that has shook the world, It has given us an opportunity to interact with our customers the last couple months. That has been very nice and we enjoyed the opportunity to catch so many of you at home. As things return to the new normal just keep in mind we are here and only a phone call away should you ever have questions or concerns.

We are very grateful to be able to provide you services. Best wishes to all!



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ZOYSIA TURF SEASONAL UPS AND DOWNS

Why doesn't my Zoysia look like it did last summer?

Zoysia grass growth is very dependent on air and soil temperature. Once we go below 70 degrees overnight in the fall, Zoysia growth slows dramatically and stops the production of chlorophyll. As the air and soil warms in the spring the growth starts back up again. This directly affects its color and general appearance. Overall Zoysia lawns are looking as good as they can based on the weather conditions we experienced this spring. Your last application was designed to improve and hold color as best as possible for this time of year. In May and June you will see continued improvement.

MOWING Zoysia

Zoysia is a favorite turf of many. It offers a lot of benefits and certainly a lot of challenges.

Zoysia can be very temperamental. We at Quality First are always striving to

put together a comprehensive plan to maintaining our Zoysia properly throughout the year. So in most newsletters we try to educate and inform all involved on what our seasonal and annual Zoysia grass needs are and how it should be maintained.

So as we look ahead to this upcoming season, which is our rainy season, the most important part of Zoysia care is mowing. After a buzz cut or a cut down it is important to maintain mowing at 1 inch for as long as possible. This is usually early to mid-June before you raise your mower 1 notch (this is generally ¼ inch so you are mowing at 1 ¼ inch). You might have to go up another ¼ inch in August and so on. Whenever a fresh cut leaves areas that look like they have been slightly scalped it is time to go up 1 notch. This is very important to maintain this slow step up in mowing height so you are not over 2 inches in November. Doing this will result in only needing a buzz cut in the spring which is less costly than having to do a full cut down



because the lawn has too much thatch. A full cut down is very labor intensive, messy, create a lot of debris, and expensive.

In our fall newsletter we will begin discussing more Zoysia related issues for that season and preparing you all for the spring addition with cut down and buzz cut information, as we feel some changes should be discussed.

As always if you have any questions regarding your Zoysia lawn care please call.

SERVICE

May has now become the beginning of Sod Web Worm season, although we have been finding Sod Web Worm during April as well they really take off in May. Your next turf application includes our Sod Web Worm prevention treatment.



Most companies do not apply this product and instead choose to be reactive. We are doing our best to protect your property and take advantage of technology which can be very costly. This is why the other companies do not use this product, that prevents sod web worms

It is also the beginning of Chinch Bug season. From now until late October our technicians are extremely conscientious to ensure Chinch Bugs are managed or controlled so turf damage will not be evident. If Chinch Bugs are found on your property, treatment is made and followed up on to ensure control.

The rainy season typically makes our turf look great, but is also fuel for weed growth. We work diligently to control weeds in your



turf, on occasion weeds do get ahead of us, especially during rainy periods. Our technicians note these problems and follow ups are set to ensure weed control is achieved and monitored throughout the rainy season.

IRRIGATION RAIN SENSORS

Rain sensors can save you water and damage to your plants and turf.

Recently a customer asked why the irrigation did not shut down after we received a rain?

This was very likely due to 1 of 3 reasons.

1. The sensor needs replaced as it has worn out or you do not have one even though it has the settings on the clock.
2. The sensor is not set or located properly.
3. We just did not get enough rain to turn the

system off.

We can and would be very happy to help you with #1 and #2. Just call our office and schedule a free inspection.

Concerning #3, The rain sensor if working properly will shut the system down if we receive enough rain at YOUR house. As the trapped water evaporates it will allow the system to turn back on.

A properly functioning rain sensor will save you water and it will save you from plant

material dying. For most the worst thing to do is manually shut the system down. It can be difficult to remember or know when the system should be turned back on. This often results in unnecessary damage. If the system is left off for too long it will also take a lot of extra water to get the soil wet again. Ultimately the little amount of water saved by shutting a system off and not getting it going again when needed will cost way more than to have just left the system on automatic. Way more \$\$\$

IRRIGATION

For those of you that do not have our irrigation maintenance program we would like to remind you it is time to visually inspect your irrigation system. Here are some critical components.

1. Is the date and time correct?
2. Are you running on an A program? Do you have B, C, or D programs turned on adding extra water? Are they still needed? (some clocks have 1, 2, 3, & 4 as the program names)
3. Are all the zones set for your summer run times?
4. You should run a zone test and check all the heads. Are any plugged, broken, out of adjustment and so on?
5. If you have any weak spots on the property you should calibrate to be sure the area is getting $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. You can see more about calibration on our web site in the recommendations section.
6. If your controller requires a battery to maintain its settings during a power outage it is time to replace the battery.
7. It is a great time to record your zone settings. For example; Zone 1, Front Lawn, 30 minutes. Zone 2..... And so on.
8. Is your rain sensor functioning? Is it set properly? We recommend it be set at $\frac{1}{2}$ inch minimum and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch maximum. This will keep the system from shutting down if you only get a fast down pour that does not actually put much water in the soil.
9. If your clock has a "seasonal adjustment" we strongly recommend you have it at 100% in our area of the state.
10. If you pump water from a lake does the filter need cleaning?

For those of you that have our maintenance program all of this is already taken care of.

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

MILLIPEDES

Soon the rains will come and along with that will be our annual Millipede invasion. These insects all lay their eggs at about the same time of the year. The egg clutch can consist of hundreds of eggs. They all hatch at about the same time. They grow rapidly and when these pests are about 1 inch long they show up by the 1000's. It is a mass migration as they leave the area they were born and go off looking for new habitat. During these migrations you might find them all over your walks, the street, the house, and even some will get inside the home. Spraying for this pest helps but because it has a very hard exoskeleton and it does not clean itself it can take several hours for them to die after contacting a pesticide. To make matters worse there is a seemingly endless supply of them. After the invasion begins they finally

disappear after 4 to 6 weeks. Treating the exterior of the home and doing some exclusion will greatly reduce the ones that get inside. Treating the lawn and shrubs does no good at all. The chemicals are designed to break down quickly and while a spray will kill the ones on your property at that very moment the next day they are replaced by 1000's more as the march continues. Millipedes are extremely frustrating and messy but they do not cause any damage and are not large enough at this point to bite or sting. Once inside, even without chemicals, they will die on their own because their bodies require high levels of moisture that they cannot find inside a structure.



IRRIGATION RUN PROGRAMING

Twice per week is our current watering restriction but is it enough during this very hot and dry season? There are a lot of alternative watering programs you might want to try, as all your yards and systems have their own unique characteristics.

Watering in the early morning is the best cultural practice as it does not extend the natural wet period of our turf. Approximately 2 AM until the dawn hits the grass is optimal.

B – Programs allow us to isolate zones or areas that need additional hydration due to poor coverage or new landscape added. A multitude of B – Programs exist, most commonly 1 extra day a week to possibly every day depending on your situation.

Afternoon hydration is ideal to alleviate stress during the hottest time of day, 3 -4 PM. This can be done during a 2 times per week program by adding on no water days usually Monday or Tuesday. In some cases, maybe even every day of the week is needed.

You also may have the opportunity to run C and D programs. This allows you multiple options for different scenarios for your landscape water needs.

The Racchio clock is another option to aid in monitoring your clock / zone operation. Please keep in mind some of the options on this clock may not be best for use in our area. Also keep in mind that a Racchio clock completely locks us out to check issues in your system.

These additional programs should only be practiced if necessary and should be discontinued as soon as our rainy season starts. If you have further questions in regards to an alternative program please contact our office so we can advise.

NEW PAYMENT OPTION

We've got exciting news! Quality First is now offering the option of paying for your services via Zelle®!

Zelle® is a fast, safe and easy way to send and receive money with friends, family and local businesses you trust!

Interested?

First things first: If you don't currently have Zelle®; download the app. on your smart phone.

Then add Steve@qualityfirstcares.com to your contacts.

In the space provided for the first Name (enter): Quality First Lawn and Shrub.

In the space provided for the last name, leave it blank.

Then input the amount owed and submit!

Simple...right?

In the event you run into any issues our office staff is here to help!

We are always available via phone at 407-737-1889; Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

407-737-1889 • We Care!



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We Care
407-737-1889

EMAIL THE EDITOR ~ Do you have a question or comment you would like addressed in an upcoming newsletter?
Send them to lynn@qualityfirstcares.com



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ZOYSIA CUT DOWN PICTURES

We thought we would share the progression of a lawn getting its spring Cut Down. This lawn had gotten extremely tall so to get where the owner wanted to be, it had to be cut down before we could start service.

Picture 1. shows the height of the lawn in mid-March

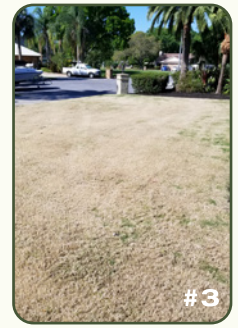
Picture 2. shows what the lawn looked like prior to the cut down. While it does not look bad it would be in horrible condition by July due to scalping and not being able to raise the mower higher.

Picture 3. Shows what the lawn looked like after the cut down. Believe it or not this was a beautiful sight as you will see next.

Picture 4. Shows the height of the grass post cut down.

Picture 5. Shows the lawn after 3 weeks of our care. It will just keep getting better.

The best part is this lawn will look like this until we get the first cold snap in the fall. Next year it will only need a buzz cut which is much easier and less costly.



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