

## Lawn Care Calendar

# Centipedegrass

Aaron Patton  
Assistant Professor -  
Turfgrass Specialist

John Boyd  
Professor -  
Weed Scientist

*These suggested maintenance practices will help you care for your lawn throughout the year. Because every site is different due to variations in location, terrain, soil type, condition of lawn, previous lawn care and other factors, adjust these practices and dates to suit your home lawn.*

Centipedegrass (*Eremochloa ophiuroides*) is a slow-growing, apple green, coarse-leaved turfgrass that is used as a low-maintenance, general-purpose turfgrass. It requires little fertilizer (1 to 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year), infrequent mowing, and grows well in full sun to moderate shade and under acidic soil conditions (pH = 5.0 to 6.0). Centipedegrass does not tolerate traffic, compaction, high-phosphorus soils, high pH (>6.0), low-potassium soils, excessive thatch, drought or heavy shade.

Centipedegrass is susceptible to a number of pests and often suffers

from a disorder termed “centipedegrass decline.” Symptoms include small, circular, dead areas after several years of good performance. Areas do not green up in the spring or begin to die in late spring or during drought stress. Grass at the edge of affected areas may yellow, wilt and die. Possible causes include nematodes, ground pearls (an insect), fairy ring (a disease) and poor cultural management. Injury from certain broadleaf weed control herbicides and mismanagement can also display these symptoms. Continual loss of centipedegrass may indicate the need to choose another grass species. Centipedegrass is best suited for the southern half of Arkansas.

Centipedegrass seed is available. ‘TifBlair’ is the most cold tolerant of the seeded varieties. Centipedegrass sod is available from many producers in Arkansas. For more information on locating centipedegrass cultivars, see the *Arkansas Sod Source Directory*, FSA6136.

*Arkansas Is  
Our Campus*

Visit our web site at:  
<http://www.uaex.edu>

## Centipedegrass maintenance calendar.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Watering</b> <sup>†</sup>				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
<b>Mowing</b>				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
<b>Fertilization</b>					●	●	●	●	●			
<b>Liming</b> ( <i>usually not necessary</i> )												
<b>Aeration</b>				●	●	●	●	●	●			
<b>Dethatching</b>				●	●	●	●	●				
<b>Seeding</b>					●	●	●					
<b>Sodding</b>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Weed control</b>												
<b>Preemergence-crabgrass</b>	●	●	●	●								
<b>Postemergence-broadleaf</b>			●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
<b>Postemergence-sedges</b>				●	●	●	●	●				
<b>Postemergence-winter annuals</b>											●	●

† Bullets represent the optimum time period to perform various maintenance practices to your centipedegrass lawn. The optimum lawn maintenance period may be started earlier or extended based on variations in annual weather conditions and/or location in Arkansas. Dark bullets represent the best months for each practice, and lightly shaded bullets represent possible months.

	<b>March Through May</b>
<b>Mowing</b>	Begin mowing when the grass turns green in the spring. Low mowing in early spring before your lawn begins actively growing is damaging to centipedegrass lawns since they spread by aboveground stems (stolons) and are more prone to injury from this scalping practice. Centipedegrass should be mowed at 1.5 to 2.0 inches. Mow often to avoid removing more than one-third of the leaf blade. It isn't necessary to collect clippings unless they remain as clumps on the lawn surface. Mowing more frequently to avoid clipping buildup is more efficient than emptying the collection bag. For more information about mowing, see <i>Mowing Your Lawn</i> , FSA6023.
<b>Fertilizing</b>	Do not fertilize with nitrogen. Apply iron (Fe) if the lawn has a yellow appearance, which is indicative of an iron deficiency. Spray a chelated iron as needed to improve turf color.
<b>Watering</b>	Irrigation is seldom needed on centipedegrass during the spring except for newly sodded areas or if dry, hot, windy conditions occur for an extended period. A dark, bluish gray color, foot-printing and wilted, folded or curled leaves indicate it is time to water. Proper irrigation may prevent or reduce pest problems and environmental stress later in the summer.
<b>Weed Control</b>	If crabgrass and goosegrass have been a problem, apply preemergence herbicides by March 1. Control broadleaf weeds as necessary with postemergence herbicides. Centipedegrass is sensitive to certain herbicides (2,4-D and MSMA), so follow label directions and use caution. Manor or Blade (metsulfuron) is an excellent broadleaf herbicide which will not damage centipedegrass when used properly. It is not readily available to homeowners and may require a professional application. SedgeHammer (halosulfuron) may be used for sedge control in centipedegrass. Vantage (sethoxydim) herbicide is safe for postemergence grass control. See FSA2109, <i>Home Lawn Weed Control</i> , for more weed control information.
<b>Disease Control</b>	If you find brown, circular patches of grass up to several feet in diameter, you may have large patch. Achieving control of large patch with fungicides is difficult. A better approach is to improve drainage and air movement and reduce nitrogen fertilization and irrigation. Reduce nitrogen fertilization to a minimum and avoid overwatering if large patch is a problem in your lawn. See FSA7527, <i>Rhizoctonia Large Patch Disease of Zoysiagrass and Bermudagrass</i> , for more disease control information.
<b>Insect Control</b>	Check for insect pests and treat if necessary.
<b>Renovation</b>	Replant large bare areas in late May using sod or plugs planted on 6- or 12-inch centers. Centipedegrass can be seeded at 0.25 to 0.5 pound per thousand square feet if no preemergence herbicide has been applied within two months of planting.

<b>June Through August</b>	
<b>Mowing</b>	Centipedegrass should be mowed every 5 to 7 days and less often when the lawn is drought stressed.
<b>Fertilizing</b>	<p>Apply 0.5 pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet approximately three weeks after the grass turns green in June. Fertilize again in July and August with 0.25-0.75 pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet , or apply 1.0 pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet in July using a fertilizer with slow-release nitrogen. Submit a soil sample to determine phosphorus and potassium requirements, if you haven't already (contact your county Extension office). Apply lime only if soil pH is less than 5.0. Do not apply more than 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year. For more information about fertilization, see <i>Fertilizing Your Lawn</i>, FSA2114. For more information about soil pH in lawns, see <i>Liming Your Lawn</i>, FSA6134.</p> <p>To determine the amount of fertilizer product required to apply 0.5 pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet, divide 0.5 by the first number (%) in the fertilizer ratio. For example, for a 20-5-5 fertilizer (containing 20% nitrogen), divide 0.5 by 0.20 (NOTE: 20% = 0.20). The result is 2.5 pounds of product per thousand square feet. For more information on calculating the amount of fertilizer you need to apply, see <i>Fertilizing Your Lawn</i>, FSA2114.</p>
<b>Watering</b>	<p>Water early in the morning to wet the soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Probe with a screwdriver to determine moisture depth. Centipedegrass needs a weekly application of 1 to 1.25 inches of water to retain its color during summer. However, centipedegrass can survive several weeks without irrigation or rainfall. On sandy soils, it requires more frequent watering: for example, 0.5 inch of water every third day. It is often necessary to irrigate an area for three to five hours to apply 1 inch of water with most homeowner irrigation systems. (It takes 620 gallons of water to apply 1 inch of water per thousand square feet.) Because clay soils accept water slowly, irrigate these areas until runoff occurs; wait one-half hour until the water has been absorbed, and then continue irrigating until the desired depth or amount is obtained. A dark, bluish gray color, foot-printing and wilted, folded or curled leaves indicate it is time to water. Proper irrigation may prevent or reduce pest and other problems.</p>
<b>Cultivation</b>	<p>Heavy clay soils or heavily trafficked sections of lawn may benefit from aerification. Check thatch depth and control with a power rake with 3-inch blade spacing or through aerification if thatch exceeds 0.75 inch. Cultivation during the early summer is preferred since moisture is usually not limiting and growth is optimum for recovery. For more information about thatch, see <i>Thatch Prevention and Control</i>, FSA6139.</p>
<b>Insect Control</b>	Check for insect pests and treat if necessary.
<b>Weed Control</b>	<p>Apply postemergence herbicides to control summer annual and perennial broadleaf weeds, such as knotweed, spurge and lespedeza. Since centipedegrass is sensitive to certain herbicides (2,4-D and MSMA), follow label directions and use with caution. Do not apply herbicides unless weeds are actively growing and the lawn is not under drought stress. If crabgrass and goosegrass are present, make a note to apply a preemergence herbicide next spring.</p>
<b>Disease Control</b>	Check for large patch.
<b>Renovation</b>	<p>Replant large bare areas in late May using sod or plugs planted on 6- or 12-inch centers.</p> <p>Centipedegrass can be seeded at 0.25 to 0.5 pound per thousand square feet.</p>
<b>September Through November</b>	
<b>Mowing</b>	Centipedegrass should be mowed every 5 to 7 days and less often when the lawn is drought stressed.
<b>Fertilizing</b>	Do not fertilize. Apply lime only if soil pH is less than 5.0.
<b>Watering</b>	Follow the March through May irrigation guidelines. Dormant Centipedegrass may still need to be watered periodically when dry, windy conditions occur for an extended period. Additionally, newly planted sod should be watered during this period to prevent desiccation.
<b>Disease Control</b>	Check for large patch.
<b>Weed Control</b>	If crabgrass and goosegrass are present, plan to apply a preemergence herbicide next spring.

December Through February	
<b>Mowing</b>	Pick up debris (rocks, sticks, leaves, etc.) from lawn. Do not try to remove excess debris by burning. This could injure the lawn and is a fire hazard.
<b>Fertilizing</b>	Do not fertilize. Submit soil samples for analysis every 2 to 3 years to determine your lawn's nutrient requirements. Be sure to specify your lawn species.
<b>Watering</b>	Newly planted sod should be watered during this period to prevent desiccation.
<b>Weed Control</b>	Apply broadleaf herbicides to control chickweed, henbit, etc. Centipedegrass is sensitive to certain postemergence herbicides like 2,4-D and MSMA, so follow label directions for reducing rates, and use with caution. Selective herbicides like atrazine and simazine can be applied in November or December to control annual bluegrass and several winter annual broadleaf weeds such as henbit. Read the label and follow directions carefully.

## Additional Information

Additional fact sheets available at <http://www.uaex.edu>

Additional information about turfgrass management available at <http://turf.uark.edu>

Printed by University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Printing Services.

**DR. AARON PATTON** is assistant professor - turfgrass specialist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, in Fayetteville. **DR. JOHN BOYD** is professor - weed scientist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, in Little Rock.

FSA6120-PD-11-08RV

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas. The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.