

INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY
By Bill Arndorfer
Grundy County Extension Education Director
September 29, 2006

With the arrival of fall, here are a few lawn care reminders to keep in mind. Continue mowing your lawn until it stops growing. Cool season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass will usually stop growing in early November. The recommended length for fall mowing of bluegrass is two to two and a half inches.

Even though the grass blades will stop growing in early November, the roots will continue to absorb nutrients. Fertilizing in late October or early November will help promote root growth and faster greening next spring. Apply one pound of nitrogen per one thousand square feet. Urea, sulfur-coated urea and IBDU are good sources of nitrogen. You may want to consider taking a soil sample, if you have not done so in a while, to determine pH as well as potassium and phosphorus needs.

Rake leaves and properly dispose of them. A thick cover of leaves on the grass can damage plants. If you have never composted before you may want to give that a try. Call the extension office and ask for: Composting Yard Waste PM 683. Small amounts of leaves could be shredded with the lawnmower and left on the lawn.

Late fall is a good time to apply a broadleaf weed herbicide. There is less chance that non target plants will be hurt by a late application. Perennial broadleaf weeds will continue to absorb herbicides until they stop growing in November. These tips were gleaned from a 1994 Horticulture and Home Pest News article written by Richard Jauron, ISU Department of Horticulture.

The Asian Lady Beetles are on the move again as they look for a place to over winter. Once they are indoors, the most effective means of control is to sweep or vacuum them up. If you squash them, they may leave a slimy smear as well as an unpleasant odor. The use of insecticides is not recommended unless the infestation is heavy, at which time professional control advice should be sought.

Another means of control is through prevention. Look for cracks, crevices, gaps or any other openings that may be allowing the beetles inside and caulk them shut. Also, Asian Lady Beetles are attracted to lighter colors such as white, grays or yellows. Light colored homes may serve as homing beacons for them.

If you have questions, call the Grundy office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.