

The Green Scene

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Get a Head Start on Spring Lawn Care

Adam Thoms assistant professor in horticulture and turfgrass extension specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, offers the following tips on how to get your lawn off to a good start this spring.

First, remove any twigs or debris from your lawn so that they don't get stuck in the mower or dull the mower's blade. If your grass is matted down and has a fungus on it, it is likely caused by Gray Snow Mold. The large amounts of snow Iowans received over the winter months can cause this issue.

Thoms said the first step to reviving your lawn from the mold is to rake the grass until it stands up. Fertilizer and warm weather usually do the rest. It is too late in the season for fungicide application.

A spring fertilizer is a great way to green up the yard quickly. Typically, apply three-fourths of a pound per 1,000 square feet of nitrogen using a "slow-release" fertilizer. The slow release will help avoid burning and other injuries to the lawn.

Lingering drought conditions from last year may delay the release of your fertilizer and lawn may take longer to grow. If you seeded your lawn last fall, it will likely need to be reseeded this spring. The fall drought may have dried out the seedlings.

If you are seeding this spring, avoid applying crabgrass preventer. Although effective in preventing crabgrass, this product will also keep the regular grass seed from germinating.

Once the lawn starts to green up and the ground is firm, then it is time to take the mower out. If your mower still needs to be serviced, consider the lawn mower service days being offered by the Ag Systems Technology Club at Iowa State. The club offers options for both push and riding mowers, and can pick your mower up at your home for an additional fee.

Want more tips, tricks, and articles? Go to hortnews.extension.iastate.edu

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Cole Crops

By Cindy Hayes, Eldon Everhart, and Richard Jauron

Planting

Cole crops perform best in full sun and well-drained soils with a pH of 6-7. Crop rotation is important. To reduce disease problems, no cole crop member should be planted in the same garden space more than once every four years.

It is possible to harvest late spring/early summer and fall crops of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and kohlrabi. Brussels sprouts perform best as a fall crop.

Plant broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage transplants in early to mid-April in central Iowa for late spring/early summer crops. Plants can be purchased at garden centers or seeds can be sown indoors 4-5 weeks before the intended outdoor planting date. Before planting, harden transplants to outdoors by gradually exposing them to longer periods of sunlight over several days.

For fall crops, start broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage transplants indoors or sow seeds directly outdoors in mid-June.

Sow brussels sprouts seeds indoors in early May. Plant seedlings in the garden in mid-June.

Collards and kale are usually direct seeded in the garden in April for a summer crop and in mid-July to early August for a fall crop.

Kohlrabi is usually direct seeded in early to mid-April for a late spring crop and July for a fall crop.

Spacing

Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and cabbage transplants should be spaced 18-24 inches apart in rows that are 24-30 inches apart.

Collard seedlings should be spaced 12 inches apart after thinning. Rows should be spaced 2-2.5 feet apart

Thin kale seedlings so plants are 8-12 inches apart. Rows should be spaced 2-2.5 feet apart.

After thinning, kohlrabi seedlings should be spaced 6-8 inches apart within the row. Rows should be spaced 18-24 inches apart.

For information on fertilization, care during the growing season, potential problems, estimated yield and more go to <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5494> and download the free Cole Crops publication.



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