



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

MESSAGE FROM

Jeff

THE JUMP FROM SPRING TO SUMMER!

May is a wonderful time of year. The transition of spring to summer begins. As May begins to warm up our grass and shrubs begin their active growing season. This also brings on the bug and disease season. This is our most challenging time of year! We are always prepared for it, but somewhere, somehow, we get thrown a curve ball.

The start of the rainy season is right around the corner or maybe not? There is no official day or date to start our rainy season like there is to start hurricane season. Just like bugs and disease there is no official day or date, its all about opportunity. Chinch bug season does not really get going until July. Molecrickets mate and lay eggs over winter. Those eggs hatch in April, May and June, then it is only a matter of time before their damage begins to surface. Sod web worm season seems to come earlier every year with the exception of this year. We have not seen or treated any active sod web worm yet. May is our month to apply our sod web worm prevention treatment. This is by far one of the crown jewels of our service as we typically do not have any sod web worm activity in our turf and if we do see activity, it is very minimal. This treatment does not stop the moths from being there. It kills the caterpillars that do the damage.

Disease issues typically do not start until rain comes more consistently. Moderate or normal rainfall is good and necessary. Excessive rain just creates issues. Last year I recorded 60 plus inches of rain at my home from June through December. That is excessive as we typically average around 53 inches per year. Year to date I have recorded; January 2 inches, February 1.25 inch, March was very wet for us, one rain event was 5 inches and I recorded 10.75 inches for the month. April started out wet with 11 inches in the first 2 weeks and it has not rained since! That is a lot of rain during typically our driest months. This could be a pre-cursor to a very wet season or possible the complete opposite and an extremely dry summer? Only time will tell. As you read through this newsletter, please pay attention to Orange County's newly adopted fertilizer ordinance. This will make service very challenges for us as we can not apply any form of nitrogen, phosphorous, or potassium to our turf or shrubs. This is certainly for good cause, but it ignores that we are trained and must be certified to apply fertilizer properly.



I hope I do not offend anyone but home owners, landscapers, and yard guys can do what they want because they are not regulated resulting in a greater negative affect on the environment. Fertilizers are only one of the contributing factors for the water quality of our lakes and streams. We are the easiest to blame and regulate so we get the heat. Our recommendation is to hold off on any landscaping projects until fall as we can do no feeding until then.

Many of our trees have put on a show for us this spring and many more are beginning their flowering stage. Jacaranda, Magnolia and our Crepe Myrtle are beginning to bloom. Many shrubs are also in full bloom, our Confederate Jasmine is intoxicating, our gardenias are beginning their show and fill the air with their aroma, Pinwheel Jasmine seems to never stop blooming, our Hibiscus are also beginning their blooming season. So, lets take some time and go out and enjoy our colorful and aromatic season.

This is also the start to our challenge of when and how much to irrigate. There are 2 articles in this newsletter to review and hopefully they will answer your questions. As you are all aware every yard and irrigation system are different, so if you have specific issues or questions for your property, we are just a phone call away.

I hope you enjoy the start of your summer and will look forward to our next edition of our newsletter in late July to early August.

Jeff

FERTILIZER ORDINANCE

Orange County has adopted and enacted a fertilizer ordinance. While we along with other lawn and shrub care companies do not believe this is the right way to resolve the aquatic problems, we do recognize there is a problem. All the science and even the Florida Dept of Agriculture support a different view than these ordinances. We all know our lakes, streams, and water table are an extremely valuable resource and as our population grows, they are put under higher levels of pressure. But if everyone was to follow the science-based Greens Industry Best Management Practices "GI-BMP" which is in place, regulated and followed by professionals, it is proven the same results are accomplished with fewer issues.

The ordinance is very involved, so what we cover here will just be the major points. As a company we do know and understand all the rules. So again, we are just hitting the main issue.

No fertilizer (nitrogen, phosphorus, or potassium) can be applied by a licensed company from June 1st to September 31st. This is called a "Black Out Period".

What does this mean to you?

1. Should you install new shrubs or turf during the blackout period no nutrients can be applied before or after the installation.
2. Should you experience damage of any kind this summer (weather, insects, fungus, and so on) no nutrients can be applied to aid or speed recovery.
3. Should your property have extremely poor soil and a mid-year nitrogen application was needed to keep your plants and turf happy this can no longer be done.

What can you or anyone do legally?

1. Nothing

We recommend that any renovations or new installations not be done during the blackout period if there is any way to avoid doing them.

We feel it is very important to know that every garden center, box store, and hardware store will still have fertilizer products on the counter for sale. You will see private individuals making

applications. Golf courses, nurseries, and a few other agricultural entities are exempt as well. Nothing is being done to stop this.

1. Just be sure to also understand miss-applied nutrients can and do kill just as fast as acid.
2. Miss-applied nutrients are much more likely to contaminate water ways.
3. Miss-applied products waste money, be it too much or not enough.
4. Miss-applied nutrients extremely increase the likelihood of damaging pools, pool decks, sidewalks, and driveways.
5. **Some fertilizer products make a stain that is impossible to clean.**



MOWING ZOYSIA

So, you have gotten your cut-down and fertilizer has been applied to your Zoysia. What do you do now? The closer to the ground you mow zoysia the better it will look and the healthier it will be. The roots of this grass are always going to stay intact with soil. You can cut it to the dirt and it will quickly grow back. To explain the best I can, it grows like a tree. The stem would be considered a trunk. At the top it puts out the leaf material like the canopy of a

tree. Unlike a tree the longer the stem gets the worse the lawn will look.

You should keep your mower as low as you can. After a couple of months, you likely will need to raise your mower blades up. You should wait until you see scalping after you mow. These will be whitish to light grey patches in the lawn that go away between mowing's. You will need to raise the mower 1 or 2 more times this season. Just be sure you don't raise

it any more than you MUST to stop the scalping. Along with all the benefits of proper maintenance for the zoysia, this will greatly reduce the amount and cost of getting your cut-down next spring. Note: if you did this to St Augustine grass it will kill it.

Landscapers that do not have experience with zoysia will be very reluctant to cut zoysia properly. If you decide to make a change, be sure the Landscaper has solid knowledge of zoysia maintenance and care.

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

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.

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.

IRRIGATION REPAIR RESULTS

We are in our 4th year of doing irrigation work. It is absolutely amazing how a properly set up system can solve many long-term problems. It is also extremely tricky to make a system efficient and when done usually results in less water used. For most irrigation companies if the spot is getting wet "then the system is fine and it must be bugs or fungus". No thought is given to the system output. This is how they are trained and this is how it always has been. Add to this the fact that most brand-new homes have system installed that stretches the entire system to its limit. The cheapest proposal gets the work. The systems are also set up for a certain landscape design with

small plants. Those plants grow along with the new plants the homeowner installs over time and everything is different except the irrigation. All greenery is a living organism. To stay alive, it must get the fluids it requires. A desert plant would not live long in Florida because it would be to wet all the time, but it would take months for it to die. A Florida plant would be baked in 2 days of desert dry soil and heat. There are days and weeks each year that our sandy soil dries out and results in die-back of our plant material.

One thing on your property that is consistent is the irrigation system. If you have a bad spot in

the yard that shows up every year in the exact same spot, wouldn't you agree that the cause would be the same every time? Wouldn't you agree in most situations the irrigation is the only thing that has not been modified between those bad spots showing up?

On properties where we have proposed modifications and the customer accepts our plan as is we see dramatic results. Especially going into the 2nd year after the work has been completed. Will the system need additional work over time? Absolutely. Things continue to change and components wear out.



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INSIDE PEST CONTROL

Our in-home pest control services are designed to keep the bugs out.

The standard program consists of treating entry points, dusting down spider webs, and applying a bait around the exterior of your home to reduce the roach and ant pressure. We make this application 4 times a year. Should you every have a pest issue inside the home we will happily return and address the issue. You only need to call and make us aware. This program minimizes your cost and more importantly the amount of chemical inside your home. We have very good success and customers are pleased with the service.

Just always remember we can't tell what is going on inside your home unless you tell us.

We do offer a second program. This program consists of coming inside the home 1 time per year and doing a very proactive preventative application. We also do the 4 exterior visits mentioned in the standard program. We apply products that leave a residual for pest that covers what crawls in but the even more likely cause, what you bring in. Pests can hitchhike with anything you introduce into the home. They can come in with groceries, appliances, electronics, deliveries, you, the kids, the pets, and many other paths. Once inside, depending on the pest, they will begin to make themselves at home. How well or clean you keep your home will have no bearing on their survival. Cleanliness can be a concern once they get in, as it relates to control. Due to the products and time involved in this program you will find it more costly but for some the peace of mind is the determining factor.

With either service it is important that you make us aware of any issues inside, so we can resolve the issue as quickly as possible.



Watch for our new American Patriots Sign!

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