

THE GROWING COMPANY Inc.

Proactive care for commercial landscapes



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010

Autumn's Arrival



Pre-Emergent

One of the most effective ways to control weeds is to apply pre-emergent herbicide. Pre-emergent herbicide prevents weeds from germinating by forming a chemical barrier on the ground surface. This herbicide is applied twice a year to prevent both winter weeds and summer weeds. Annual bluegrass, *Poa annua*, is one of the primary targets of pre-emergent in the fall. *Poa annua* is one of the most common weeds of turf, ornamental plantings, and gardens in the United States. It starts germinating in late summer or fall as soil temperatures fall below 70°F and continues to germinate throughout winter.

Thatch and Overseed – Prevents Lawn Problems

Thatch is a layer of dead plant material such as roots, grass and leaves that forms near the surface of soil. In healthy lawns, organisms such as bacteria, fungi, worms and insects dethatch soil naturally. When air and water, the most essential elements of healthy grass, are cut off, diseases and pests are left free to devour your lawn.

Dethatching and aeration also help protect your lawn from unwanted problems such as fungus. Additional benefits are increased root growth, efficient fertilizer application by circulating air and carbon dioxide to the roots, and improved water absorption (less runoff).

To check the thatch levels in your lawn, work your fingers down beneath the grass and measure the depth of the layer of the matted underlying material. If this layer is 1/2 inch or more, it is time to dethatch.

The best time to perform this chore is in the fall.



Bug of the Month

Green lacewings are primarily predatory during the larvae stage of their life cycle. The tiny larvae are known as “Aphid Lions” because they can eat 1000 aphids per day. They remain as larvae for up to 21 days, just crawling around looking for food. When attacking prey, the larva lunges forward, impaling the aphid. Green lacewings will eat spider mites, thrips, leafhoppers, whiteflies, caterpillar eggs and just about any other soft bodied pests. The adult green lacewing, feeding only on pollen, will lay its eggs, and the life cycle will repeat. Adults are green with transparent wings having an interconnecting network of fine veins and have golden eyes.



Fall Color

Annual color beds provide exciting combinations of color, form and texture that will impress visitors to your property. The optimal time to plant annual flowers that will survive through winter growing conditions is late September/early October. It is important to plant during this time to allow new plantings to take root and become established. Most annuals will not grow much during cold winter temperatures, therefore it is best to let them mature during the fall. Many times, we are forced to remove thriving summer annuals to allow for the transition to winter annuals. Some examples of winter annuals are pansies, chrysanthemum paludosum, primrose, calendula, Iceland poppies and snapdragons.



Legislative Update

The Water Conservation Landscaping Act (**Assembly Bill 1881, Laird**) has future repercussions for all California residents. This far-reaching act directs water providers and consumers in water use, and will dictate what kind of irrigation devices can be sold and purchased in California. The bill required cities and counties to adopt landscape water conservation ordinances by January 1, 2010. Any landscape one acre in size or greater may be subject to irrigation audits, irrigation surveys or water use analysis programs for evaluating irrigation system performance. For additional information, please visit www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/landscapeordinance.