



LAWN CARE GUIDE • PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

ST. AUGUSTINE LAWN CALENDAR

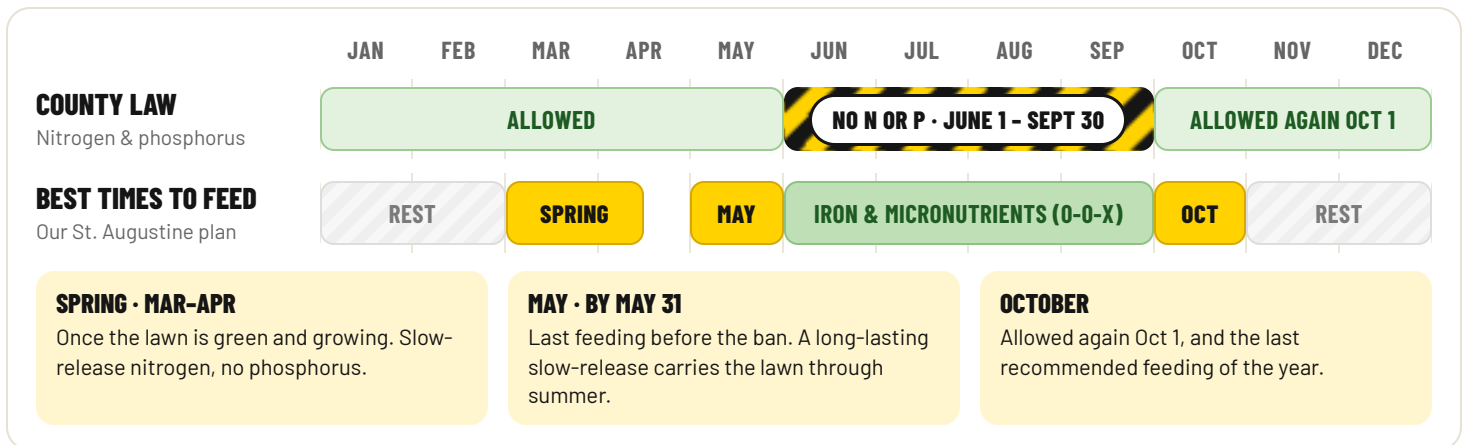
When to fertilize, when to treat for weeds, fungus and bugs, and when not to.

FERTILIZER SEASON **OCT 1 – MAY 31**

SUMMER BAN **JUNE 1 – SEPT 30**

WHEN FERTILIZER IS ALLOWED

Pinellas County fertilizer ordinance



THE RULES IN PINELLAS COUNTY

Apply to homeowners and lawn pros



Florida doesn't have one statewide fertilizer calendar. More than 90 Florida counties and cities set their own summer rules. This guide follows Pinellas County's ordinance, and St. Petersburg runs the same June 1 – Sept 30 ban. Outside Pinellas, check your county's dates.



ST. AUGUSTINE LAWN CALENDAR • PINELLAS COUNTY

YOUR LAWN YEAR AT A GLANCE

Best time to apply Watch: treat only if found Peak Not allowed (county law) Skip Mowing Watering

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
RAINY SEASON													
FEEDING													
FERTILIZER Slow-release N, no phosphorus	REST		SPRING		MAY	COUNTY BAN: NO N OR P				OCT	REST		
IRON & MICRONUTRIENTS Summer color, no N or P						0-0-X PRODUCTS ONLY							
WEEDS													
PRE-EMERGENT Stops weeds before they sprout											FALL		
BROADLEAF WEED SPRAY Spot-spray on days under 85°F					SPRING	TOO HOT					FALL-WINTER		
DISEASE													
LARGE PATCH Prevent mid-to-late October											ACTIVE		
GRAY LEAF SPOT Hot, humid, rainy weather													
TAKE-ALL ROOT ROT Long rainy stretches													
SUGARCANE MOSAIC Virus: no cure													
BUGS (INSECTICIDE)													
CHINCH BUGS Worst in early July													
WEBWORMS & ARMYWORMS Soap-flush to check													
BASIC CARE													
MOWING 3.5-4 in, never scalp		EVERY2-3 WKS	WEEKLY								EVERY2-3 WKS		
WATERING In dry weather; skip after rain		10-14 DAYS	WEEKLY	2-6 DAYS	2-3 DAYS IF NO RAIN				WEEKLY	1-2 WKS			

MOWING

Cut St. Augustine at 3.5-4 inches. Never take off more than a third of the blade at once. Leave clippings on the lawn, but keep them out of the street.

WATERING

Water when a third to half of the lawn shows stress: blades folded in half like a taco shell, a blue-gray color, or footprints that stay. Give it ½-¾ inch early in the morning, on your allowed days. Month-by-month guide on page 5.

BEFORE YOU SPRAY

Confirm the problem first. The wrong product wastes money and stresses the lawn. Rates, temperature limits and timing on the product label always come first.



WHEN NOT TO, AND WHAT TO WATCH FOR

WHEN NOT TO

LAW Pinellas County ordinance **TIP** UF/IFAS Extension and best practice



DON'T FERTILIZE

- LAW** June 1 – Sept 30 (nitrogen or phosphorus)
- LAW** During a storm watch or warning, or with 2+ inches of rain forecast within 24 hours
- LAW** Within 10 feet of water, a seawall or a wetland
- LAW** On new sod or new plants for the first 30 days
- LAW** With phosphorus, unless a soil test calls for it
- TIP** November – February, while the grass is slowed down
- TIP** With heavy or quick-release nitrogen while large patch or gray leaf spot is active
- TIP** With weed-and-feed products



DON'T SPRAY WEED KILLER

- At 85°F or hotter. It burns St. Augustine.
- While the lawn is greening up in spring (check the label)
- On stressed or diseased grass, like a lawn with root rot or drought stress
- Right before rain or watering, unless the label says to water it in
- On windy days. Drift damages shrubs and flower beds.



DON'T SPRAY BUG KILLER

- Without checking first. Treat what you actually find.
- With the same product every time. Rotate products so bugs don't build resistance.
- Across the whole yard for one problem spot
- On nearly grown caterpillars. They're about to pupate, so spraying does little.

WATCH FOR THESE

Check the edge where brown grass meets green



CHINCH BUGS

Warm months, worst in early July

SIGNS

Yellow-to-brown patches that start in hot, dry, sunny spots along driveways and sidewalks, then spread.

CHECK

Part the grass at the edge of the damage. Look for tiny black-and-white adults or orange nymphs.

TREAT

Only if you find them. Rotate products each season; chinch bugs resist many insecticides.



LAWN CATERpillARS

Late summer into fall

SIGNS

Sod webworms and armyworms chew notches in blades. Patches look mowed too short. Green-brown droppings.

CHECK

Soap flush: 2 tbsp dish soap in 2 gallons of water over 1 square yard. Caterpillars surface in about 5 minutes.

TREAT

At 5–8 webworms or 3–4 armyworms per square foot. Bt works best on small caterpillars.



GRAY LEAF SPOT

May – September

SIGNS

Oval spots on the blades with gray centers and dark borders. The lawn thins and looks scorched.

PREVENT

Water before sunrise only, and skip watering when it rains every few days. Mow at the right height. No heavy nitrogen.

TREAT

Fungicide if it keeps spreading.



LARGE PATCH

November – May, under 80°F

SIGNS

Round patches that keep growing, with orange or dark edges and sunken brown centers. Blades pull off easily.

PREVENT

Fungicide in mid-to-late October where it has shown up before. Only light, slow-release nitrogen.

TREAT

Fungicide stops the spread. It may need repeating through winter.



TAKE-ALL ROOT ROT

Summer & early fall rains

SIGNS

Irregular yellow or light-green patches. Roots turn short, black and rotted. Easy to mistake for chinch bugs.

PREVENT

Correct mowing height, no scalping, no weed killers, and small, frequent feedings of slow-release nitrogen and potassium. It is very hard to stop once you can see it.



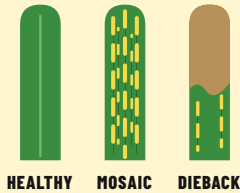
BUGS OR FUNGUS?

How to tell before you treat

- Check the edge where brown meets green. That's where the problem is active.
- A soap flush brings caterpillars up. Chinch bugs hide at the soil line.
- Tug test: blades pull off easily and the base or roots are dark? Think fungus or root rot.
- Treat only what you find.



SUGARCANE MOSAIC: NO CURE



A virus first found in Pinellas County lawns in 2014. Nothing cures it, and it can kill Floratam lawns.

Mowers and string trimmers can carry it from one lawn to the next on clippings and sap. Aphids may spread it too.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Broken yellow streaks running between the veins of otherwise green blades. Mild cases are easy to miss.
- In Floratam and Provista it can turn into dieback (lethal viral necrosis) that gets worse from September into spring.
- Other problems look similar, so only a lab test can confirm it. UF/IFAS tests for it for about \$40, with results in about a week.

WHICH GRASS

CAN DIE

Floratam, Provista

STREAKS, BUT SURVIVE

Other St. Augustine varieties tested, including Palmetto, CitraBlue and Bitterblue

CAN CARRY IT

Bermudagrass, crabgrass and fountaingrass

HOW TO SLOW THE SPREAD

- Mow healthy lawns first and suspect lawns last.
- Don't mow a suspect lawn while it's wet from dew, rain or sprinklers.
- Between lawns, let mowers and trimmers dry, or clean them with diluted bleach, quaternary ammonium or alcohol (follow the label).
- Leave clippings on the infected lawn. Don't haul them to another property.

IF IT'S CONFIRMED

- Fungicides, insecticides and fertilizer won't cure it or stop it.
- Replace the lawn with a variety that survives it, like Palmetto, CitraBlue or Bitterblue. Floratam put back down has died again the next year.
- The soil doesn't need to be treated or removed.
- Buy sod from a Turfgrass Producers of Florida member. Misabeled sod has been sold.

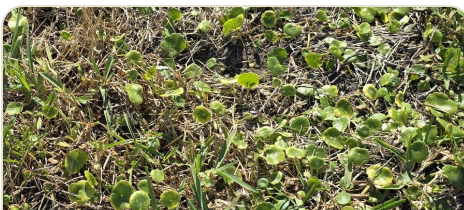
WHAT TO DO

Get a lab test before paying for any treatment, because sprays and fertilizer won't fix it. Until you know, have the lawn mowed last, only when it's dry, with the equipment cleaned afterward.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The streaks stay year-round. Floratam and Provista thin out each fall and winter and may partly green up in spring. A Floratam lawn can die within about three years. Other varieties keep the streaks but survive.

WHAT YOUR LAWN IS TELLING YOU



DOLLARWEED: TOO MUCH WATER

The round, coin-shaped leaves take over where the soil stays wet. Cut back watering and check for leaky heads.



DOVEWEED: TOO WET, TOO THIN

Doveweed and its look-alike, dayflower, spread over thin spots where the soil stays wet. Fix the watering and thicken the grass.



BARE SPOTS: WEEDS MOVE IN

Weeds fill any gap. Find the cause first (water, mowing height, bugs or roots), then treat.

Real photos from Bee's Lawn Care jobs



WATERING BY MONTH



WHAT WE'RE AIMING FOR

Thick, deep green St. Augustine, cut at 3.5–4 inches. The goal is deep watering: $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch at a time, only when a third to half of the lawn folds like a taco shell, turns blue-gray or holds footprints.

MONTH	WATER NEED	IN DRY WEATHER, WATER ABOUT EVERY	NOTES
JANUARY	<div></div>	10–14 days	Skip a week when you can
FEBRUARY	<div></div>	10–14 days	Skip a week when you can
MARCH	<div></div>	Week	Driest months begin
APRIL	<div></div>	4–6 days	One of the driest months
MAY	<div></div>	2–4 days	Hottest, driest stretch
JUNE	<div></div>	2–3 days	Rainy season: skip a watering after a storm drops $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. Not twice a day: $\frac{3}{4}$ inch at a time grows deeper roots than a little every day.
JULY	<div></div>	2–3 days	
AUGUST	<div></div>	2–3 days	
SEPTEMBER	<div></div>	2–3 days	
OCTOBER	<div></div>	Week	Rainy season ends around Oct. 10
NOVEMBER	<div></div>	7–10 days	Cooler weather: water less
DECEMBER	<div></div>	10–14 days	Too much water invites disease

When it isn't raining, this is about how often St. Augustine needs $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, based on UF/IFAS and Southwest Florida Water Management District guidance. Rain resets the clock, and the taco-shell test always comes first. Blue rows are the rainy season.

HOW LONG TO RUN EACH ZONE

1. Set 5–10 empty tuna or coffee cans around one zone.
2. Run that zone for 15 minutes.
3. Measure the water in each can with a ruler and average them.
4. Multiply by 4. That's inches per hour.
5. Divide $\frac{3}{4}$ by that number, then multiply by 60 for minutes.

Example: cans average $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in 15 minutes = 1 inch per hour, so run 45 minutes. Test every zone. Each one puts out water at its own rate.

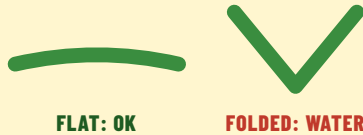
YOUR WATERING DAYS

- **St. Pete reclaimed water:** not restricted right now. The city asks for three days a week or less, early morning or evening.
- **Pinellas County reclaimed:** two set days a week.
- **City drinking water or a private well:** one day a week through March 31, 2027. Normally St. Pete allows two.
- Check stpete.org/WaterRestrictions or pinellas.gov for your days. Page 6 covers dry spells.



WATERING IN A DRY SPELL

Grass blade, seen from the tip



In a hot, dry spell, St. Augustine can need water every 1-5 days. How often you're allowed to water depends on your water source.

Water when a third to half of the lawn folds like a taco shell, turns blue-gray or holds footprints. Below: the rules by water source, the legal ways to water more, and how to make each watering last.

RULES BY WATER SOURCE

- **St. Pete reclaimed water:** not restricted right now, so you can water on the lawn's schedule. The city asks for three days a week or less (even addresses Tue, Thu, Sat; odd Wed, Fri, Sun) and lowers the pressure 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Pinellas County reclaimed:** two set days a week.
- **City drinking water and private wells:** one day a week through March 31, 2027. Wells are not exempt. Normally, St. Pete allows two days.
- On restricted water, hand-watering a lawn counts too: only on your day, in your time slot.
- Tickets are \$193 and double each time.
- Check stpete.org/WaterRestrictions or pinellas.gov for your days and hours.

LEGAL WAYS TO WATER MORE

- **Reclaimed water:** if a reclaimed line runs on your street, ask the city about hooking up.
- **New sod, plugs or a lawn renovation in St. Pete:** on drinking water or a well, a 30-day variance lets you water the new grass any day, in the allowed hours. Call Water Resources at 727-893-7261. One per six months, no extensions. Reclaimed water doesn't need one.
- **Pinellas County Utilities:** new grass can be watered any day for 30 days, then up to three days a week through day 60. Proof is submitted online. The county currently advises against re-sodding during the shortage.
- A whole zone only qualifies if half or more of it is new grass. Otherwise, hand-water just the new pieces.
- On restricted water, there's no extra-watering allowance for an existing lawn, even a damaged one.

MAKE EACH WATERING COUNT

- Put down the full $\frac{3}{4}$ inch every time. The can test on page 5 sets your run times.
- Even on unrestricted reclaimed water, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch when the lawn needs it beats a little every day. Light, frequent watering grows shallow roots.
- Split it into two or three short runs in the same time window so it soaks in instead of running off.
- Fix coverage first. Dry edges along driveways and sidewalks are often a sprinkler head problem.
- Mow at the top height and keep blades sharp.
- Hold off on fertilizer and weed killers until the rain returns.
- Keep foot traffic and parking off stressed grass.
- Skip your day if it just rained $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- St. Augustine doesn't handle drought well without watering.
- On one day a week in a hot, dry spell, the hottest spots may thin or brown. The goal is to keep the lawn alive until the rain comes.
- Keep checking for chinch bugs. They hit hot, dry, stressed grass first.
- If spots die, page 7 covers how to tell dead from dormant and how to replant. New grass qualifies for the extra watering above.



RECOVERING FROM DROUGHT DAMAGE



DEAD RUNNERS

Dry, brittle and gray-brown, with nothing green left. A spot like this won't fill in on its own.

DEAD OR JUST DORMANT?

FIRST

Check the edge of the brown area for chinch bugs. Their damage looks like drought, and they hit dry, stressed grass first.

ALIVE

Pull up a runner from the brown area. If it's green inside, bends instead of snapping, and still has healthy white roots, it should green back up once it gets water.

DEAD

Runners that are dry and brittle, snap when bent, and pull up with no roots are dead. Those spots need plugs or sod.

RECOVERY, STEP BY STEP

- 1 Find the cause first.** Check sprinkler coverage, run times (the can test on page 5) and chinch bugs. Otherwise new grass can die the same way.
- 2 Give live grass time.** Allow a few weeks of rain or regular watering before deciding what's dead.
- 3 Mow at the top height.** Don't scalp stressed grass.
- 4 Feed once it's growing again.** June 1 – Sept 30, iron and micronutrients (0-0-X) only. Slow-release nitrogen is allowed again Oct 1.
- 5 Hold off on weed killers** until the lawn has recovered, and never at 85°F or hotter.
- 6 Replant the dead spots** with plugs or sod once the cause is fixed.

REPLANTING DEAD SPOTS

- **Plugs:** 2-inch pieces set about 12 inches apart. Closer spacing fills in faster.
- **Sod** covers the spot right away.
- **Timing:** spring and summer, when St. Augustine grows fastest. During the water shortage, the water district suggests waiting for the rainy season in June, and Pinellas County advises against re-sodding for now.
- If the lawn is Floratam and sugarcane mosaic is possible, replant with a variety that survives it (page 4).

WATERING AND FEEDING NEW GRASS

- **New sod:** several short waterings a day for the first 7–10 days, then once a day (1/4–1/2 inch) for 7–10 more, then 2–3 times a week. It should be rooted in 3–4 weeks.
- On restricted water, stay within your allowed hours and the new-grass allowance: a 30-day variance in St. Pete (727-893-7261), or 60 days on Pinellas County Utilities water. St. Pete reclaimed water needs no variance.
- **First mow** once the sod doesn't lift when you tug an edge.
- **No nitrogen for the first 30 days** (county law). Feed sod after 30–60 days, and plugs once they've filled in.

NEXT SUMMER

Run the can test in spring and fix any sprinkler heads before May. Mow at 3.5–4 inches, and start checking sunny edges for chinch bugs in April.



SEASON BY SEASON

WINTER DEC - FEB

- No nitrogen. The grass has slowed down, and October was the last feeding.
- Mowing drops to every 2-3 weeks. Keep the height up.
- Water every 10-14 days at most, and only when the grass shows stress.
- Watch for large patch: round brown patches with orange edges.
- Mid-February: spring pre-emergent goes down, before temperatures stay above 65-70°F.
- Floratam lawns with sugarcane mosaic can die back now. See page 4.

SPRING MAR - MAY

- First feeding once the lawn is green and growing. Slow-release, no phosphorus.
- Spot-spray broadleaf weeds after green-up, only on days under 85°F.
- Spring is hot and dry. By May the lawn can need water every 2-4 days. Water when blades fold like a taco shell, turn blue-gray, or hold footprints.
- Start checking sunny, dry edges for chinch bugs in April.
- Last feeding before the ban, by May 31, with a long-lasting slow-release.

SUMMER JUN - SEP

- No nitrogen or phosphorus. Iron and micronutrients (0-0-X) keep the color up.
- When it isn't raining, the lawn can need $\frac{3}{4}$ inch every 2-3 days. Water early when blades fold like a taco shell, and skip it after a storm drops $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.
- Weekly mowing at 3.5-4 inches. No scalping.
- Peak season for chinch bugs, gray leaf spot and take-all root rot. Caterpillars show up late in the summer.
- No weed killers once it's 85°F or hotter.

FALL OCT - NOV

- Fertilizer is allowed again Oct 1. October is the last recommended feeding of the year. Never weed-and-feed.
- Water fertilizer in with about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, no more.
- Mid-to-late October: preventive fungicide for large patch where it has shown up before.
- Fall pre-emergent once nights drop to 55-60°F for several nights.
- Check for webworms and armyworms. Water about once a week in October, less in November. Mowing moves to every 2-3 weeks in November.

SHADE UNDER OAKS

Most lawn grass needs about 6 hours of direct sun a day. Live oaks cast dense shade and grow large surface roots, so St. Augustine under them thins out, and fertilizer can't make up for the missing light. Seville, Delmar, Captiva and Sapphire are St. Augustine varieties that handle shade better.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ■ Mow shaded grass higher than the sunny areas. | ■ Keep foot traffic and parking off shaded grass. | ■ Thinning or raising the canopy lets in light. Use an ISA Certified Arborist. |
| ■ Feed and water shade less. It grows slower and stays damp longer. | ■ Don't let oak leaves pile up. Mow over them or rake them into beds as mulch. | ■ Where grass keeps failing, switch to mulch or a shade groundcover like Asiatic jasmine or mondo grass. |



QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR LAWN?

📱 **Text 727-239-5840**

beeslawncarellc@gmail.com • beeslawncare.com • Serving St. Petersburg & Seminole

Sources: Pinellas County Fertilizer Ordinance and 2026 Fertilizer Usage Guide (pinellas.gov/fertilizer); City of St. Petersburg; UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County; UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions (chinch bugs, crabgrass, large patch); UF/IFAS EDIS IN383, ENH1115, PP313, EP457, LH025 and LH013; UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions (renovating your lawn); Southwest Florida Water Management District; UF/IFAS Plant Diagnostic Center; St. Petersburg Water Resources. Timing is for St. Augustine lawns in Pinellas County and shifts with the weather each year. Always read and follow the product label.