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Should I Hire a Professional Lawn Care Service?

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Considering hiring a professional lawn care company to maintain your lawn? There are many different companies available to maintain your lawn and each company may offer slightly different services and at different prices. The following are answers to some commonly asked questions when considering hiring a professional lawn care company.

What are the advantages of hiring professional lawn care?

- Service - it is a convenient way to maintain an attractive lawn, especially with today's busy lifestyles.
- Expertise - lawn care professionals should understand how plants grow and what it takes to create an attractive lawn.
- Simplifies the confusing task of purchasing the proper fertilizers and/or pesticides for your lawn.
- Eliminates the time-consuming task of calibrating spreaders and sprayers to accurately apply products.
- Eliminates the liability for proper storage of fertilizers and pesticides which should be stored in a locked, waterproof, and ventilated area.
- Reduces the possible risks to our environment from inexperienced homeowners applying fertilizers and pesticides to their lawns.
- Professionals can use some pesticides that are not labelled for home-owner use.

Are there disadvantages to hiring professional lawn care?

- Some consider professional lawn care to be expensive.
- With some companies, busy production schedules may not allow for perfectly-timed application or services.
- Some enjoy working on their lawn.

What should you look for in a quality lawn care service?

- Reputation - check with friends or neighbors and ask for references to determine if it is a reputable company.
- License and insurance - the state of Indiana requires all lawn care companies to hold pesticide applicators licenses and liability insurance.
- Membership in professional organizations such as the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), Indiana State Lawn Care Association (ISLCA), and/or the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation (MRTF). These organizations promote professionalism in the lawn care industry and provide education on the latest lawn management techniques.
- Willingness to customize application schedules and to fit your needs and wants.
- Knowledgeable applicators that are willing to share information with you.

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Why does my lawn care company make applications at different times of the year than is recommended by Purdue University?

- Purdue recommends an ideal time to apply a particular fertilizer and/or pesticide to a lawn. However, even though Purdue often recommends a specific week for a management practice, that practice could probably be done a couple of weeks earlier or later without sacrificing the desired effect. Lawn care companies often have many lawns to treat and thus, it is difficult to schedule an application at the exact time that Purdue recommends. Additionally, lawn care companies may apply the recommended rate of a product, but it may be applied in two separate applications.

What can I do to help my lawn care company make my lawn look better?

- Working with a lawn care company is a partnership where the effectiveness of their work depends largely on how

you maintain your lawn. No matter how much work a company does on your lawn, it can not be an attractive lawn unless you mow and irrigate according to their instructions.

- Do not apply extra fertilizer or pesticides beyond that which is applied and/or recommended by your company.
- Mow frequently and at a height of 2.5 to 3.5 inches
- If you decide to irrigate your lawn, water early in the morning and water “deep and infrequently”. Deep and infrequent watering means to wet the soil profile to a depth of just below the root depth and then don’t water again until the grass shows the first signs of drought stress, which is when the grass turns a bluish-grey color during the heat of the day.
- Follow the company’s recommendations for irrigating, mowing, and use of a lawn after an application.

**More information is available at
www.agry.purdue.edu/turf**