

Class is in Session

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Come one, come all, come join me for a presentation on making your home lawn look its best. This is my idea to help our membership at Dellwood Hills manage their lawns and my opportunity to meet more members at our club. It is my goal to connect and meet members who I may not be subjected to all the time while providing a subject matter they will find interesting. The big question for them will be, how do I get my yard to look like the golf course?

One evening this spring, I will host a presentation for members on how to manage their lawns and answer the most common questions. For example, how do I get rid of weeds in my yard, how and when do I treat for certain weeds, when and what kind of fertilizer to use and what is the best way to grow grass in bare spots? Also, winter kill and aeration are good subjects to touch on. By hosting this informational meeting, I will be able to answer these questions all at once and not out on the course.

After a warm welcome, I will start out my presentation with tons of pictures of home lawns, good and bad. You know the saying a picture is worth a thousand words? I believe this audience is going to take home more from the pictures than any data I will present. A picture will keep their attention far longer than my talking about growing grass.

After my introduction and brief overview of the subject being covered, I will start with what is on everyone's mind, weeds and how to control them. I don't want to over stimulate them with all the weeds out there, so I will concentrate on the 10 most common weeds a homeowner faces each summer. Let them know having weeds is normal; however, controlling them is easy. Broadleaf weeds are commonly found everywhere and for the best control, spray a post-emergent herbicide. Whoa, slow down, those are big words. Remember who your audience is,

they are not fellow superintendents, these are ordinary folks who have no clue what you are talking about. Cover your bases, explain anything that may be in question.

The other big weed infestation problem is from crabgrass. It is a pain in the rear to eliminate because of the large seed bank in the soil. The numbers are gigantic and they will always be in the soil. The seed is only waiting for the right conditions for it to flourish and that goes for all weeds. Use a specific crabgrass herbicide

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to eradicate it and it may take multiple applications.

To limit the amount of weeds, having a healthy stand of turf is your best bet. To achieve this we need to feed the grass with a fertilizer. Feeding them will encourage them to grow and fill in thin areas where weeds like to grow. You essentially want your grass to out-compete the weeds in those areas. So, what kind of fertilizer do you use? There are thousands of combinations to choose from; any one will be great to use, it all depends on how much you want to mow after applying. Home Depot now sells Lesco brand fertilizer and I bet you, if you tell your members you use it on the course, they will go home and buy it themselves. They are looking for advice from a professional and they can see the product work at the golf course. One thing to mention is the combination of using a fertilizer plus herbicide. It comes

down to personal preference and there are pros and cons to using them.

When applying your fertilizer there are two types of methods, a drop and rotary spreader. They both are very tricky to use and with some practice your lawn will be spot-free. Show them pictures of homeowners who have used a drop spreader; they are usually pretty easy to pick out in the spring with their dark lush lines. Sometimes, going down at half rates will make your lawn less noticeable if a problem does happen.

The next topic is my favorite, winterkill. Other than weed prevention, this is the top question asked about. Not only does Mother Nature help with this matter but Man's best friend can do a number on anyone's lawn. Homeowners will spend top dollar fixing their yards every year, why not help them out for a fraction of the cost? Tell them with a tiny bit of effort, you can save a lot of money. Rake it up, loosen the soil, put seed down, cover it and keep it moist. It is that simple.

The best product I have used is an all-in-one seed, fertilizer and mulch kit found at all home improvement stores. Remember, you want to keep it simple, they are not going to baby it like we will so don't make it complicated.

Each member who comes to the presentation will go home with a handout of common weed identification tips. The first part of May is a great time to host this talk because soil temperatures are rising and homeowners are thinking about their yards. The take-home message for your members is how to manage their own lawn. For you, it is putting together a presentation, help you with your public speaking and getting your name out there with the members. The good news is, with a topic like this, it won't be hard to talk about it once you get started because you know so much about it.