

## Prepare Your Lawn for Autumn!

### Fall Preparation

A few tips to keep your Lawn looking its best.

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Another attack of the Amorous arealists

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A new pest coming to a Lawn near you

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Temperatures may be dropping soon... but our attention to our lawns should not. In fact, this change in weather is just the time to make a few adjustments to your lawn care. We here at Deans will be adjusting our applications, but if you tackle the chore of lawn fertilization yourself, we hope you'll review these tips so that you'll have a great looking lawn come spring.

### Fight the Fungus

Damp conditions mixed with cooler temperatures of autumn increase the risk of fungus problems. Brown Patch Fungus is an especially prevalent fungus and often attacks Zoysia and St. Augustine lawns.

Symptoms of Brown Patch begin with round, discolored patches that slowly expand. The center is usually brown and sunken, but if the turf is recovering you may notice

new green growth there too. Patches continue to expand in the spring, until temperatures climb above 80°.

With the return of warmer weather in spring and summer, the affected areas will recover.

At Deans, we'll be lowering our nitrogen to inhibit fungal growth and adding a specialized fungicide to work against any existing problem areas. If you notice Brown Patch, be sure to take control measures quickly or notify Deans and ask about our Lawn Fertilization program.

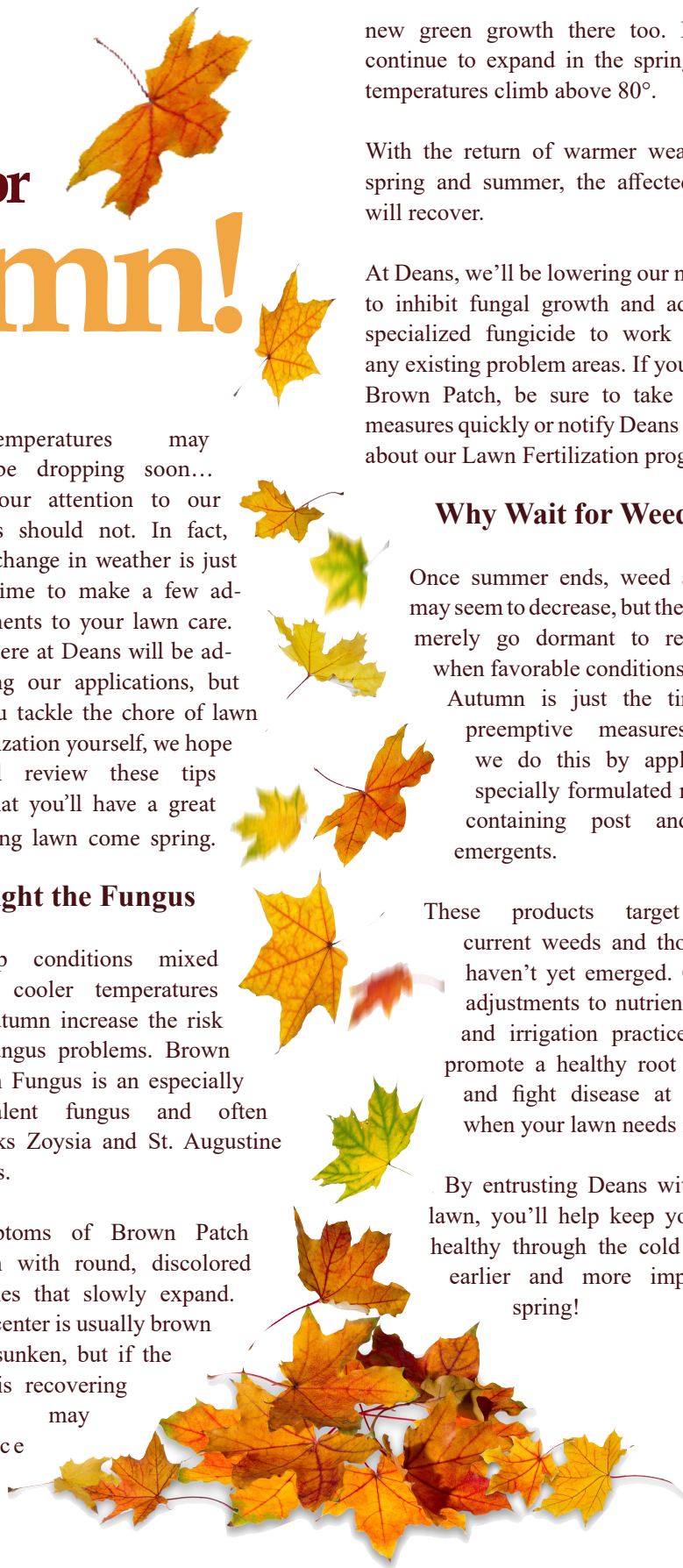
### Why Wait for Weeds?

Once summer ends, weed activity may seem to decrease, but their seeds merely go dormant to reemerge when favorable conditions return.

Autumn is just the time for preemptive measures, and we do this by applying a specially formulated mixture containing post and pre-emergents.

These products target both current weeds and those that haven't yet emerged. Careful adjustments to nutrient levels and irrigation practices, will promote a healthy root system and fight disease at a time when your lawn needs it most.

By entrusting Deans with your lawn, you'll help keep your turf healthy through the cold for an earlier and more impressive spring!





# Love Is in the Air

If you've lived in Florida for more than a few months, you probably know exactly what we're talking about. Lovebugs!

A member of the fly family, and closely related to mosquitos and gnats, lovebugs are found in Central America and the Gulf Coast of the United States. They were observed as early as 1911 in Louisiana and were found throughout most of Florida by 1970.

It's worth noting that they are a naturally occurring species and were not, as urban legend has it, genetically engineered in a University of Florida laboratory.

Among their beneficial contributions is that they feed on decaying vegetation and plant nectar, meaning that they aid in eliminating thatch in ornamental turfs, help in natural decomposition, and play a part in pollination.

They don't sting and they're not poisonous, but these insects tend to top many Floridians' Most Annoying list, and with good reason — love-

bugs swarm by the millions each mating season.

Swarms usually occur in May and September and typically last about five weeks. Since they seem to be attracted to vehicle exhaust, they present a particular problem for motorists.

Due to the acidic nature of their body chemistry, their remains may damage the vehicle finishes. Quickly removing the dead bugs is crucial and applying a thin coat of wax will help with removal the next time.

Regular dethatching and refraining from over-watering can provide some control while they're in the larval stage, and Deans Services of-

fers a robust treatment plan for the overall health of your lawn, landscaping, and home.

Unfortunately, complete lovebug eradication isn't possible (and it's wise to be skeptical of any company claiming to offer this). Instead, it may be best to focus on the positive.

These seasonal visitors are a nuisance, but as natural recyclers and pollinators they're doing good for the environment...and that's something we should all love.

# Tiny & TENACIOUS

## Meet The Tuttle Mealy Bug



The name “Tuttle mealybug” may sound unfamiliar to you now, but that’s likely to change soon. That’s because this lawn pest has recently begun infesting lawns in central Florida; and developing a treatment has proven to be a challenge for researchers.

Also known as the rice mealy bug due to their affinity for rice grass, this warm season pest is most often found in late summer-fall and affects Zoysia turf especially. They can be difficult to see because of their size (< 2 mm) and because they hide deep within the lawn thatch — that is, accumulation of dead grass and organic matter.

Despite their tiny size, mealybug presence can have a huge impact on the health of your lawn. Using their piercing mouthparts, these pinkish-white insects suck vital fluids from your turf. This weakens and dehydrates the grass, leaving unsightly patches which, at first glance, appear to be due to lack of water. To make matters worse, mealybugs develop a layer of protective wax as they grow, and this — coupled with their thatch habitat — keeps them protected from common insecticides.

While challenging to control, it is possible to reduce numbers if the infestation is caught early. Your Deans technician is trained to identify Tuttle Mealy Bug damage, but DIY homeowners must watch

carefully for signs of infestation so control measures can be taken quickly. Here are a few tips on how to identify and reduce Tuttle mealybugs.

### How’s the Water?

If you notice discoloration in the lawn, make sure to check that your irrigation is set properly to rule out drought-stress as the real culprit (see table). If the suspicious area is covered well, Tuttle Mealy Bugs may be at work.

### Take a Look

Using a magnifying glass, carefully inspect the base of the grass blades. Tuttle mealybugs are elusive, so be patient. Look also for white waxy material or black mold a byproduct of the honeydew they leave behind.

### Dethatch

A moderate amount of turf thatch is usually beneficial, but when

Tuttle mealybugs infest, this layer protects them from insecticidal applications. Dethatching (i.e. mechanically removing excess thatch) will help expose the insects to remedial applications. In severe cases, aeration may also be required.

### Call Deans

The Tuttle Mealybug is an emerging challenge for homeowners and lawn care companies alike, but Deans has an array of systemic control products. These work by entering the plant’s vascular system and targeting the Mealybugs as they feed.

These professional formulations, along with dethatching and careful follow up inspections, will give your lawn the best chance for success against the Tuttle mealybug!

| Temperature | Weekly Frequency | Amount | Duration<br>(PGP) | Duration<br>(MP) |
|-------------|------------------|--------|-------------------|------------------|
| > 85°       | 2 or 3 times     | 0.75”  | 45 min            | 80 min           |
| 76-85°      | Twice            | 0.5”   | 30 min            | 70 min           |
| 46-75°      | Once             | 0.5”   | 30 min            | 70 min           |
| < 46°       | Do Not Water     |        |                   |                  |