DEANS SERVICES Buzz
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READY FOR THE FREEZE

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Florida may be known as a retreat from the cold, but as we've seen in recent weeks, extreme weather patterns can cause cold fronts to dip well into The Sunshine State. When a freeze arrives, it's important to know what to expect, what to do (or not do), and how to prepare your turf for the next big chill!

BOLD TO BLAND

Nearly all grasses will lose some color during winter. A uniform dulling or yellowing isn't any cause for alarm; in fact, it's a sign that the plant is conserving its resources properly. Never apply nitrogen to force growth during this dormancy process. Force-feeding nutrients during dormancy will inhibit healthy root growth and even accelerate the growth of cool season weeds.

WATCH YOUR STEP

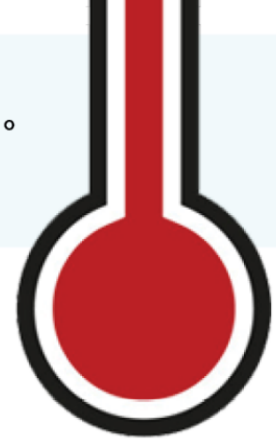
A common mistake is mowing or even walking on grass during or immediately after a freeze. Because grass blades contain water, they become brittle in the cold and will break easily and foot traffic will cause yellowish track marks. This damage is only superficial and will disappear as the grass grows, but you'll need to be patient, as turf growth is slower during the dormant phase.

WATER FOR WINTER

Perhaps the most important factor that will affect how well your turf withstands a freeze is its root system. Watering as outlined below helps roots grow deeply; and deep roots stay well insulated from icy conditions. During cooler months, reduce watering as needed.

		Times weekly	PGP	MP
86°+	3/4″	3	45 mins	105 mins
76-85°	1/2″	2	30 mins	70 mins
46-75°	1/2″	1	30 mins	70 mins

< 46°	Do not water



- PGP (Professional Grade Pop-up) heads have a higher output.
- MP (Matched Precipitation) sprinklers have a lower output.
- Established ornamentals require 20 minutes, twice per week.
- Suggestions are approximate. Local restrictions may apply.

GO LONG

When mowing in autumn and winter, allow your grass to grow a little bit longer. We recommend 3.5 – 4” for St. Augustine and 2 – 3” for Zoysia. This helps protect from invasive weeds and allows growth of your root system when it’s most important.

TOUGHEN YOUR TURF

A well-balanced, year-round fertilization program is critical for creating a winter-hardy lawn. Without one, cold snaps will weaken your lawn, causing thin areas to appear and cool-season weeds to take root. These weeds will out-compete your turf, allowing warm season weeds to take their place later in the season. This leads to an uphill battle against weeds all year.

Below is an unaltered photo of two lawns. The Deans lawn on the left was provided with our balanced nutrient blend for a winter-ready root system. The lawn on the right was not. While minor dormancy fading still occurred, the benefit of a program is clear.

During cooler months, Deans helps root growth and protects against fungal pathogens by increasing our potassium application. We also spot treat those wily winter weeds. If you haven't already, we hope you'll choose Deans - for a healthy lawn all year round!

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(Not So) Fun Fact #212

While most spiders prefer to remain outside, many species are happy to creep inside during winter. Reduce their presence by eliminating garage clutter, sealing entry points, and targeting the insects on which they prey with a Home Pest program from Deans!

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