



LAWN CARE

PLANNING GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

If you'd rather shut your blinds than gaze out at your lawn, there's definitely a problem.

Your yard should be a space you can relax in and enjoy. But, things like weeds, pests and diseases can get in the way of having a lawn you want to walk barefoot through.

Instead of letting these nuisances make your yard their permanent home, create a lawn care plan to identify, treat and maintain your outdoor space.

Some important parts of a solid plan include knowing when, how and what to treat in your lawn. Those three things will play a big role in the success of your lawn care.

In addition to your lawn care plan, you'll also want to make sure you don't let your regular maintenance go to the wayside. That can play a large role in how successful your plan will be.

Whether your lawn has more weeds than grass or just needs some sprucing up, it can really benefit from having a lawn care plan.

Ready to have a lawn that attracts attention for all of the right reasons? Here's a complete lawn care planning guide on how to have the lush (and healthy) yard of your dreams.



Before you go crazy spraying every weed in sight, you need to know when to treat them for the best results.

Apply chemicals too early or too late in the season, and you'll see little to no results. That not only wastes your time and resources, but it can also lead to resistance issues.

The course of action and timeline will greatly depend on your lawn's specific needs, but here are the general rules to follow:

- » **During early spring, apply pre-emergent herbicides** to your lawn before the weeds' seeds germinate. These chemicals basically suffocate the seeds and prevent them from growing. Then, you won't have to worry as much about weeds once the weather heats back up.
- » **Post-emergent herbicides should be used in late spring once weeds have begun growing.** They are efficient for managing perennial weeds and travel into the root systems to kill them.

If you suspect your soil's pH or other levels are off, you can also perform a soil analysis during any season.

While you can implement a lawn care plan at any time of the year, it's best to start during the early spring. That way, you can get a leg up on the weeds and nip them in the bud before they ever start growing.

No matter when you begin your lawn treatment, just remember it can take time to see results, especially if you have an extensive weed problem. Some weeds also require more treatments than others.

So, if you aren't satisfied with what you're seeing after a few applications, try to be patient. Your lawn didn't get that way overnight — although it may seem like it — so don't expect it to all be fixed in a day either.

FOLLOW A LAWN CARE TIMELINE

HOW TO SAY GOODBYE TO WEEDS

Weeds are the vultures of lawns. They attack the weaker areas of your yard, survive in the most desolate of spaces and are always unwanted visitors.

To keep your lawn from becoming a weed's next victim, start working to take back your yard.

The first step to ridding your lawn of weeds is identifying the culprits. Weeds fall into two main categories: grassy or broadleaf.



Here are some of the top weeds you'll find in Idaho Falls:

- » **Dandelions:** Probably the easiest to identify, dandelions appear as flowers and also seed heads.
- » **Thistle:** This plant has sharp prickles on the top.
- » **Whitetop:** This weed crowds out native species. It has stalks with leaves and white flowers on top.
- » **Cheatgrass:** It normally germinates in the autumn and flowers in spring or early summer.
- » **Catchweed:** They have creeping, straggling stems that grow over other plants and along the ground. They are also known as stickyweed and cleavers.

These weeds can invade your plant beds, lawns and even hardscaped spaces if there are cracks.

To identify a weed on your own, you can type in its description online and look through images until you find it. That can be time-consuming and difficult, so you can also reach out to your local extension office or lawn care company.

Once you know the type or types of weeds on your lawn, find an herbicide that specifically treats it.

Here are some safety precautions to take when applying chemicals:

- » Wear pants, a long-sleeved shirt, closed-toed shoes, gloves and eye protection.
- » Do not apply chemicals on a windy day.
- » Keep chemicals away from water sources.
- » Do not over-apply products.
- » Never mix products.



If you get chemicals on your skin or in your eyes, wash the affected area immediately.

Also, make sure you read the instructions on the products carefully. They will need to be stored in a safe location out of the reach of children. Check to see if they need to be kept at a certain temperature.



TOP TURF DISEASES AND HOW TO TREAT THEM

Luckily, there aren't too many turf diseases in Idaho Falls because of our dry climate.

They mainly appear because of improper irrigation practices or excessive shade, making maintenance an important aspect of disease prevention.

However, there are a few diseases you need to be on the lookout for in our area:

- » **Powdery Mildew:** It looks like a white, powdery mass on grass, and it can even make your lawn look like it was covered with flour. Powdery mildew appears in shady areas, especially on Kentucky bluegrass. Applying too much fertilizer can make the issue worse. You can help get rid of this disease by minimizing shade and improving the air circulation.
- » **Fairy Ring:** This mushroom-type fungi causes dark circles on your lawn. To prevent it from appearing, you'll need to remove any wood materials lying around in the lawn. Aeration and properly watering the infected areas can also improve the conditions.
- » **Rust:** Like the name suggests, rust is an orange-colored fungus that affects grass. And if it's bad enough, it will even leave a rust-colored dust on your shoes and other surfaces. It's normally the result of not fertilizing enough or turf becoming drought stressed. So, improving your fertilization and irrigation practices can help prevent rust.

Turf diseases can be difficult to identify to the average person. **A lawn care professional or extension office can help you figure out what's causing your problem.**

You will also need to rule out that your grass is just dormant or dead, since these can cause your lawn to become brown.

Dormant grass will grow back when it's in season and watered correctly. If your entire lawn is the same color brown, your grass is probably dormant.

On the other hand, dead grass will not come back. You can tell if it's dead by tugging on the grass. If it comes out easily, it's most likely dead and will need to be replaced.



KICK PESTS OFF OF YOUR PROPERTY



Unlike weeds and diseases, the signs of lawn pests might not be as quickly spotted. But, they can have damaging effects on your yard if not properly treated.

Here are three of the top pests often found on Idaho lawns:

- » **Billbugs:** The adults are about 1/4 inch long and do little damage to lawns. However, the larval stage billbug eats stems and roots. The larvae are small and white with brown heads. People often mistake their damage for drought stress. The best solution is to take preventive action using insecticides, because once you see damage, it could be too late.
- » **White Grubs:** The larval stage of June beetles, white grubs are white, have three pairs of legs and are seen in a "C" shape. They also eat grass roots, causing severe wilting and eventual death of your lawn. There are insecticides created to control them, but it can be difficult to reach them in the soil. Aeration can improve your treatment chances.
- » **Moles:** If you have billbugs or white grubs, you're basically saying your lawn is an open buffet for critters like moles. If you have moles, you'll see dirt mounds and tunnels throughout your yard. There are several humane ways to rid your lawn of moles, like using repellants that encourages them to find a home somewhere else.

Just like with weeds, you need to properly identify the type of pest that is infesting your lawn before you can start to apply insecticides or other treatments.

Having a professional examine your lawn to see if there are early signs of pests can make a huge difference in the success of the treatment. This is one lawn issue you don't want to wait to address. These pests won't just affect your lawn's curb appeal — they can also kill it.



TAKE AN ORGANIC APPROACH TO LAWN CARE

Spraying chemicals isn't appealing to all people, especially if you have children or pets.

Luckily, most chemicals are safe to be around once they dry. However, if you're still concerned and want to take a more environmentally friendly approach, consider using organic lawn care products.

Organic products are derived from natural sources — hence the name — and help make lawns more sustainable during time.

These products are definitely not the norm when it comes to lawn care treatments, so it's good to research if they will work for you.

Here's a look at the benefits and downsides to help you decide if organic is right for you and your yard.

Choosing between organic and traditional chemicals is really a personal preference. If your top concern is the environment, this might be right for you. On the other hand, if you want quick results for a lower price, the chemical route could be best.

Pros of Organic Products

- » Safer for children and pets immediately after application
- » Reduces the chance of harmful pollutants reaching water sources
- » Biodegradable
- » Improves root health
- » Lessens drought stress on your yard

Cons of Organic Products

- » Costs more than applying traditional chemicals
- » Takes longer to produce results
- » Not all lawn care companies offer organic lawn care products

YOUR LAWN CARE PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE REGULAR MAINTENANCE

There's more to having a lush yard than just lawn care services.

To keep your lawn looking its best and healthy year round, you also need to incorporate regular maintenance into your plan. Weeds and other lawn problems can often be caused (or at least made worse) by not keeping up with your yard's maintenance.

Here are just a few of the things you should be doing to keep your lawn looking its best:

- » Mow grass at a 3 inch height.
- » Aerate lawn once or twice a year, depending on its condition.
- » Set and follow an irrigation schedule.
- » Remove dead foliage.
- » Add mulch to prevent weed growth and keep moisture in the soil.

You can combine your lawn care and maintenance services, if you want, to make sure it's all covered. Plus, if you have the same person handling both, they will be more likely to catch an issue early on because they are familiar with all aspects of your lawn.



LAWN MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

What do you really need from your lawn maintenance company? Is mowing enough, or should you consider a full list of services?

The answer to those lawn care questions is really up to you and how much curb appeal you want your yard to have. To help you figure out what maintenance services you need, here are five of the top ones to consider.

- Mowing:** At Outback Landscape we take our mowing seriously. We live for straight, clean mowing lines.
- Edging:** It goes hand-in-hand with mowing and helps give your grass a crisp look around sidewalks, driveways, plant beds and other defined spaces. This is best done weekly.
- Pruning and Trimming:** Your grass could look great, but if your trees and shrubs are so overgrown that they are about to topple over, no one is going to notice the lawn. Keeping your foliage well maintained will also improve the overall health of your yard and will not impede your irrigation system.
- Water Features:** If you have fountains, ponds or other water features, keep them clean and clear with regular maintenance.
- Remove Leaves:** Whether you mulch or blow fallen leaves during the fall, it's just important you do it if they are covering a substantial part of your lawn. Leaves can smother your grass and promote snow mold diseases.





WHY HIRE A PROFESSIONAL LAWN CARE COMPANY?

“Professional” has become synonymous with “pricey” for many, helping the DIY movement gain ground.

And there are several outdoor projects you can get your hands dirty with, like planting colorful perennials or adding some outdoor furniture to your patio. But sometimes, it’s safer and more cost-efficient to turn your project over to a professional.

Unless you know what type of weed, pest or disease is infesting your lawn and the exact amount of chemical needed to treat the problem, you’re better off turning to someone with experience. Also, professionals will have access to stronger and different chemicals than you can buy from the home improvement store, no matter what the label says.

There are several benefits to hiring a professional lawn care company, beyond taking the task off of your hands and giving you back your weekends.

A pro will know what, when and where to spray chemicals on your lawn for the best results. Plus, they’ll keep the chemicals off of your other plants and prevent runoff issues.

That might not sound like that big of a bonus, but you’ll appreciate that expertise when your flowers and shrubs aren’t dead because the chemicals accidentally reached the wrong areas.

At Outback Landscape, our lawn care services start at \$45 per application, and that amount varies depending on a few factors:

- » Yard’s square footage
- » Type of weeds, pests and/or diseases
- » Amount of service visits required
- » Additional requests or services

Your yard and its issues are unique, and so it needs a custom lawn care plan.



PUT YOUR LAWN CARE PLAN INTO ACTION

Watching yards go from brown weed havens to green, healthy lawns is one of the highlights of our job at Outback Landscape.

Our passionate team can create and implement a lawn care plan that's unique to your yard's needs — whether you have weeds, pests or turf disease.

We start by visiting your home to see what type of lawn care issues you're having. For more specific problems, we'll perform an on-site lawn analysis to determine what type of treatment and care will best fit your yard's needs. Our goal is to give you the lush lawn you've always wanted.

In addition to lawn care services, we can also design, install and maintain your landscape features. Our team will also manage your irrigation system, remove snow and ice during the winter, install landscape lighting and add a festive flair to your home with holiday lights. We really are a one-stop shop.

We are located in Idaho Falls, and we provide lawn and landscape services throughout Southeast Idaho and Wyoming.

Ready to take back control of your lawn? Let our experienced lawn care team handle it all.

Contact us at 208-656-3220 or on [Outbacklandscapeinc.com](https://www.outbacklandscapeinc.com) to get a free estimate for our lawn care services.