

Fusarium Blight

Fusarium blight is a fungus most active on cool season grasses – Bluegrass, Fescue – but will attack any grass. Our Chicago-land lawns typically consist of a mixture of high percentage Bluegrass and the rest, a toss-up between creeping Fescues and Ryegrass. This is why Fusarium can be so widespread and damaging to our area.

It is commonly called the “frog eye” disease because the patches form brown circles that look like, well, frog’s eyes. Excessive watering can cause a breeding ground for Fusarium, but the disease typically will not show itself until high levels of humidity are present. Temperatures above 70 degrees are most favorable.

Unfortunately we’ve had a lot of rain this year, and with the slightest bit of humidity, we have seen a large outbreak of Fusarium. The best step you can take to prevent Fusarium from overtaking your lawn is to water only in the morning, never at night.



3860 W. 127th St. Alsip, IL 60803 Phone: 708-389-8119 www.williamquinnandsons.com



William Quinn & Sons Newsletter

Summer 2010

Wet Weather & Your Landscapes

If there was one word we could use to describe our weather this spring and summer it would have to be “amazing.” It seems like we’re being drenched in rain nearly every day – giving our roads, sewers, rivers, and (most importantly to us) landscaping little time to dry out and “take a breather.” We all know what happens when a river overflows, or when a sewer can’t handle any more water, but what will this amazing weather do to our beautiful landscapes?

The immediate impacts are obvious: Mushrooms. Mushrooms grow from wind-blown spores, bury themselves in the soil, and wait until the conditions are right – wet weather – to appear. They are unsightly, but the good news is that they are also not harmful to the turf or landscape beds. There is no control for the mushrooms we see (unless it is associated with a turf disease like Fairy Ring), and the best solution is to simply wait until the soil dries up.

Some trees have begun to show signs of scab or rust disease. Apple scab is more common on green leafed non-resistant varieties of crabapples, but can affect just about any cultivar. Leaves may turn yellow or orange with noticeable “black spots” on them, and the tree will eventually shed the leaves early (early-mid summer). One thing is certain though – they sure are growing more than normal this year!

Bugs, bugs, bugs. There are a lot of mosquitoes. The puddles left by the rain are perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and we’re already seeing quite a bit of them. Using any repellent with DEET will help, and Consumer Reports rated OFF! as one of the better brands to buy (Deep Woods and Family Unscented were in the top 3).

Turf disease will be almost inevitable this year. Fungus needs 2 things to survive and harm: dampness for at least 12 hours, and humidity. We’ve definitely seen the wetness, now we wait for the humidity. Fungicides are usually a “last resort” option. It is typically cheaper to reseed damaged areas in the lawn than it is to treat them with a fungicide. Most diseases in the lawn can be cured by stopping irrigation (if an irrigation system is present) for a week or so and allowing the turf (and soil) to dry.

What else can we expect? The truth is that no one really knows. One thing is certain though – the plants are REALLY growing this year!



WILLIAM QUINN & SONS
3860 W. 127th Street
Alsip, IL 60803



Cathy's Corner

We hope everyone's summer is going well. The weather has been a big challenge for us this season. It seemed as though the rain would never stop, and when it did for a brief period, mother nature turned up the heat!

As you're aware, the weather decides our schedule not only for landscaping but regular maintenance as well. To date many deciduous shrubs have already been trimmed four times this season – twice the normal average during Chicago's summer months. We have been working hard to keep up with the rapid growth!

Flexibility with our regular schedules has become part of our regular routine. I realized that this weather isn't normal when a weather forecaster says this summer has been "crazy." Aren't we all sick and tired of these record breaking seasons? When can we return to the years of having "average" weather?

As in the past we are continuing the point competition for each foreman and their crew. We welcome all comments regarding your service, but especially appreciate when you let us know if an employee has gone above and beyond your expectations so that they can be properly acknowledged. This is our way of showing our maintenance crews that their efforts really do make a difference. During this extreme weather I would like to thank those of you who so generously provide your maintenance crew with water and pop. Your kindness goes a long way with the men who work hard every day during this trying weather.

Now is a great time to think about fall plantings. Once again, we will be offering tree specials on all nursery stock. You will be receiving a flier indicating availability and varieties in a few weeks. Anyone who is interested in scheduling a mid-season walk-thru can contact the office at any time.

As always, we appreciate your business and are truly blessed with the great people we work with who work hard to keep their properties looking beautiful. I know that being a board member may seem like a thankless job. You can't keep everyone happy, and many owners only come forward when they want to complain! I know that I joke about your "high paying positions" when residents are demanding – and sometimes demeaning. Don't let a minority get you down! Keep your head up and remember that you represent all owners, and have their best interests at heart. We recognize your efforts and appreciate everything you do.

Cathy

The Spray Front

I haven't heard of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) spreading in quite a while – at least not outside of the existing containment areas. This doesn't mean that we can stop worrying about the EAB, but the containment measures seem to be working (for now). If you have Ash trees on your property that you would like to protect, I can provide you with a quote for an injection that will provide protection of the Ash tree for up to three years. The benefits of maintaining an established Ash tree far outweigh the costs and frustrations of removal and replacement.

There are a few "new" invasive insects I'm keeping an eye out for. One in particular is the Viburnum Lead Beetle. If you catch a defoliated Viburnum on your property, please call me for an inspection! We

want to keep this "new" beetle from becoming a nuisance in our area, and current control recommendations are non-insecticidal.

We may not like it when it rains as often as it has this year, but most of our "pest" insects dislike it even more! Bagworms and Spider Mites have yet to establish destructive numbers this year. Bagworms were fooled by the temperatures earlier in the year, and decided to setup camp South of I-80. Spider Mites - those pesky bugs that turn your burning bush red then force the leaves to drop - rarely survive in large enough numbers during "wet" summers to do much damage.

Mid-summer Gardening Tips

There comes a time in the summer when we realize that our gardens are looking a little tired. Not all hope is lost. There are a few simple things that you can do this weekend to perk up your garden so you can enjoy it for the rest of the season. Take a look at the 'blank' spots and fill them in with new perennials. Most garden centers are running specials this time of year, so you can get good deals.

Planting at this time of the year will require a little bit more care due to the heat and dryness of summer. Be sure that adequate water is supplied to summer plantings. It is essential to keep plants watered consistently during stretches of hot weather. On average, plants need one inch of water per week and this may need to be stepped up to one inch every 4 or 5 days depending on the temperature. Watering is the MOST important maintenance item, so don't skimp on it. As you water, avoid wetting the foliage whenever possible as this can lead to disease problems. Only water your plants in the morning or late afternoon.



If you did not mulch in spring, consider doing it now. A two to three inch layer of mulch can reduce weed problems, conserve moisture, give the garden a better look, and reduce erosion. Plants under drought stress need water, not fertilizer. If water is lacking, fertilizer won't help. Vegetable gardens and annual beds that are producing may benefit from fertilizer, but perennials and woody plants usually don't need it mid-summer. Some plants start to look tattered or tired in midsummer and may need to be rejuvenated. Try pruning them back to encourage new growth.

Be sure to supply extra water to plants that have been pruned back, to help encourage the production of new leaves. Some perennials may even flower a second time. Deadhead annuals to produce more flowers. Removing the old flower before it sets seeds will encourage continual bloom. These few simple steps can help keep the garden looking good all season.

Learning From Our Mistakes

Most of you will remember when Dutch Elm Disease threatened all of the American Elm trees in our area. The solution back then was to simply remove all American Elms and (sometimes) plant resistant varieties in their place. Now the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is threatening to do the same to all species of Ash trees in our neighborhoods.

The reason Dutch Elm Disease became so wide spread was the practice of planting too many identical species of trees in many areas. American Elms used to be everywhere! The Ash trees is the most populous in the Chicagoland area right now...and look at where we're at! How many Linden trees and Honeylocusts and

Silver Maples do you see on a very regular basis?

Problems like Dutch Elm disease and the EAB are so detrimental to our landscapes because of the tendency to overplant similar species. The City of Chicago is now implementing a rule (as most municipalities have) that no more than 10% of a neighborhood's parkway trees should be of the same species. Diversity in planting is the key to minimizing disastrous problems like the Emerald Ash Borer.

If you are looking to plant a new tree, we urge you to look around at your neighbors' trees. It's not wise to plant exactly what they have – no matter the beauty of it. Pick something different!

