

OCTOBER

LOTS OF SHADE AND BLOWING LEAVES

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During the growing season tree shade can reduce the energy production in grass plants, making them weak and more susceptible to stresses and pests. The result is a thin strand of turfgrass or completely bare spot that can lead to surface water runoff. Consider the following:

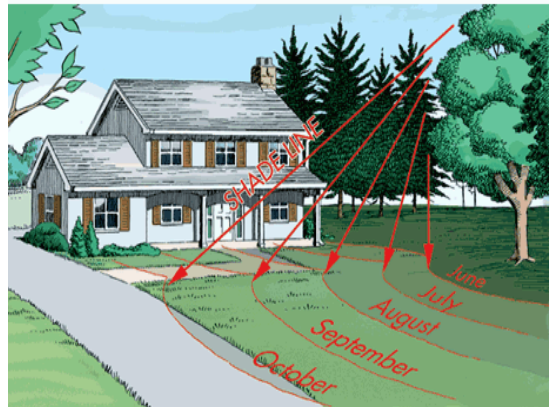
What to do?

Raise the canopy or understory to improve air movement.

Selectively prune entire trees in group plantings. Grass needs a minimum of 4 hours of direct sunlight.

Turfgrass shade management:

- ◆ Select grass species that show tolerance to shade, for example, fine fescues or blends.
- ◆ Fertilize less often because plants in low light grow more slowly.
- ◆ Irrigate less often but more deeply to water deeper grass roots.
- ◆ Mow at the high end of the recommended mowing height for the species.
- ◆ Don't fight Mother Nature! Consider mulching around the bases of trees with wood chips or bark mulch or planting groundcovers adapted to the shade. These include pachysandra, lily of the valley, English ivy, periwinkle, creeping myrtle, or creeping mahonia.



The angle of the sun changes and increases or decreases the area that receives light.

OCTOBER is a good time for mowing as long as the grass is growing.

Fertilizing can be done around Halloween to Thanksgiving when the plant is actively growing.

Raking should be done if you will not be mulching with your mower. This minimizes mold and prevents grass suffocation.

Core aerating can be done to reduce compaction and improve drainage.

Tree Leaves Are Loaded with Phosphorus; autumn is a critical time to protect your water quality so watch where your leaves go! As deciduous trees begin to shed their leaves in preparation for winter, we run the risk of large amounts of phosphorus being loaded into our surface water runoff and ultimately into lakes and streams. Algal blooms will flourish in these infected waterways owing to the readily available phosphorus; lower levels of dissolved oxygen from plant dieback can be fatal to fish and other aquatic organisms. This process is called eutrophication.

Consider instead:

- ◆ Using a mulching mower to shred the fallen leaves into small enough pieces to be mulched into the turf to decompose.
- ◆ Collecting grass clippings and leaves for composting away from the road. Mix in a ration of one part clippings to three part leaves.

