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[NC Extension Gardener Handbook](#)
[Carolina Lawns](#)

Thank-you Susan, for a great job about two of my favorite topics. I learned some new things today.

1. Hello everyone.> I am Wanda Brown and I've been a Master Gardener for 3 years. I will be presenting information today about LAWNS taken from the the NC Extension Gardener Handbook and the Carolina Lawns publication. You'll be able to find links to these two publications on the resource page for this webinar.
2. Let's start by looking at this picture. Isn't this lawn beautiful? Don't we always turn our heads when we pass by a beautiful lawn? Wouldn't you like to look outside the window at your home and see a lawn that looks like this?
3. I hope the following information will help you make this happen by improving the health and appearance of your lawn.

Lawns

[NC Extension Gardener Handbook Chapter 9](#)

What are lawns?

- Smooth living carpets
- Adds beauty and recreational space
- Helps the environment by stabilizing the soil, reducing air pollution, noise, heat, dust, and glare.
- Can add value to your home

So, What are Lawns?

Lawns are smooth living carpets that can add beauty and recreational space to your home.

A lawn helps the environment by stabilizing the soil, reducing air pollution, noise, heat, dust, and glare.

And a beautiful lawn can add value to your home.

So Where Do We Start?

A lush lawn with minimal maintenance and pesticide use can be achieved by choosing a well- adapted grass for your location and planting it during the correct time of the year.

So the first step to your “dream Lawn” is choosing which type of grass you will use to establish a new lawn or to renovate an existing lawn.

So where do we start? Look at this first statement?

READ THE SLIDE

Cool Season vs Warm Season Grasses

Cool Season Grasses

- Found in the mountain and piedmont regions of NC
- Planted in early fall
- Remain green throughout most of the winter
- Perform best in the spring and the fall
- Can become stressed in summer heat
- Examples: Tall fescues, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and fine fescues

There are two categories of grass grown in NC. Cool season and Warm season. We'll first discuss the characteristics of cool season grass.

READ THE SLIDE

Cool Season vs Warm Season Grasses

Warm Season Grasses

- Found in the piedmont and coastal plains of NC
- Planted in late spring or early summer
- Grow best in summer
- Go dormant in fall with heavy frost and turn brown
- Greens up slowly in the spring
- Perform better the farther east and south you live
- Examples: Bermudagrass, zoysia, centipedegrass, St. Augustine grass, carpetgrass, and bahiagrass

Now let's look at warm season grasses.

READ THE SLIDE.

After viewing the information, did you notice that both warm season and cool season grasses can be grown in the piedmont?

So how do you decide whether you need cool or warm season grasses for your lawn?

Choosing the Right Grass

Grass Choice Considerations

- [Region](#)
- [Climate](#)
- Desired appearance

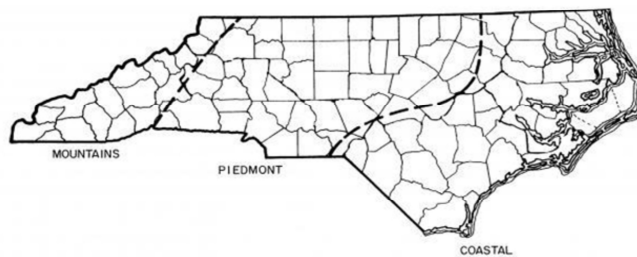


Figure 9-1. A regional map showing the mountain, piedmont, and the coastal plain regions of North Carolina

What information should we consider when choosing the right grass for our lawn?

1. Let's look at the NC Regions map. Most of us in this area have probably always thought that we live in the piedmont. We do live almost in the center of the state, right? If you are joining us from Wake Co. you will see that you are definitely in the piedmont region. If you live in Harnett County you will see that the division line for the piedmont and the coastal plains runs directly through the middle of the county.

So now we need to look specifically at your Harnett County address to decide which region you live in and to see what soil type you have on your property.

The best resource tool to locate this information is to use Harnett County GIS maps. You can also find this site listed on the resource guide for today's presentations.

Once you arrive at the website you will select the "tax parcels" option. You will be prompted to enter your physical property address. At that point a map and an information box will pop up. In the box it will tell you exactly in which region you live. When I put in my address on Dry Creek Rd, just down highway 210 between here and Harnett Central schools I found that I live in the Southern Coastal Plains. Also in this box it tells me that I have Norfolk A and Norfolk B soils. So this is a quick place to get the information you need and if you want to read further about your soil type you can select the Soil Analysis Document to read more.

2. The next consideration for choosing the right grass is the CLIMATE. Climate refers to the specific characteristics of the area where you live. Things to think about here are:

- Where are the shaded parts of your property. How long is this area shaded? What grass will tolerate various amounts of shade.
 - Will there be a lot of wear and tear in the area you select to plant grass? Will Children play there? What grass will tolerate a lot of activity?
 - Which grass will tolerate heat, cold or drought conditions that might occur in your area?
3. Next is DESIRED APPEARANCE. Did you realize that you can also choose the color and texture of you grass? Color selections can be light, medium, dark and shades in between. Texture selections can be fine, medium, course or a combination of two of these.

You will find information to help answer these questions and select an appropriate grass for your site on an excellent chart found in both the MG Handbook and Carolina Lawns publication. This chart also includes information on rates of grass establishment and maintenance requirements for each grass choice.

I personally find this chart to be a great resource tool as it puts everything in one place.

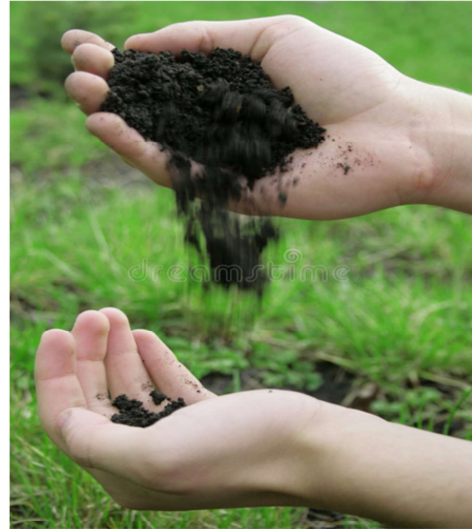
New Lawns

Site Preparation

- Soil prep – Soil Test
- Fertilization
- Planting at the right time
- Planting method
 - seed, sod, sprig

Maintenance

- Irrigation
- Mowing
- Integrated Pest Management



<https://www.dreamstime.com>

If you are establishing a new lawn, here are the things you will want to focus on before you “throw out the seeds”.

How will you prepare your site?

1. Prepare the soil by getting rid of current vegetation, make sure it is level and that all soil parts are smaller than a marble.
2. Do a soil test as discussed earlier in Sabrina’s presentation on soils.
3. Use soil test results to amend the soil as needed before planting.
4. Make sure to plant in the right season based on the grass you selected.
4. Choose your planting method - You may choose from planting seeds, sprigs which are a vegetative method using actual grass plants and spacing over the prepared soil, and sod which is a pre-grown grass purchased in rolls or squares.

Also before you “throw out the seeds” you might want to research Maintenance Needs to make sure that you will be ready to tackle these chores as they arise.

- So here you will need to
1. Determine how you will irrigate.
 2. Know how often and what height you should mow your grass for optimum growth and health.
 3. Research the fertilization schedule for your grass and what types of fertilizer you will need.

4. Acquaint yourself with IPM to prepare for problems that might arise. We'll discuss more about IPM later in the presentation.

Established Lawns

Maintenance

- Irrigation
- Mowing
- Fertilizing - Soil Test
- Weed Management
- Coring and power raking

Renovation

- When to renovate
- Considerations



Photo: Peter Landschoot

Most of you may already have an established lawn whether it is from a new home or an older home.

If it is a newly built home the grass will already have been established when you purchase the house. In this case, see what you can find out from the builder. Find out the type of grass planted so that you will know how to proceed in taking care of the lawn. While you have them on the phone ask them to give you information about all the plants placed in the landscape. You'll find this information will also be helpful.

In an older home the lawn may need some revitalization, or maybe there are places that need some attention.

Let's look at some lawn **MAINTENANCE** jobs that might possibly be reasons that your lawn does not look its best.

Irrigation - Is there too much or not enough water. How can you remedy this?

Mowing - Are you mowing correctly? Too low? Mower unlevel, causing bare spots? What changes might be needed?

Fertilizing - Does your grass need amendments? Do a soil test to check for specific needs?

Weed Management - Are there too many weeds. What is the best way to control? Hand pulling, digging out, treating with pre/post emergent applications?

Do you have thatch buildup or is your soil compacted?

Coring - is a process that will alleviate compaction of the soil which is caused by heavy traffic in the yard. Grass doesn't grow well in compacted soil. Coring is done by using a device that will remove cores of soil over the lawn. These cores are then broken up and

spread out across the lawn.

Power Raking can be used when thatch has built up. Some grasses tend to build up thatch when heavily fertilized and watered. Power raking is performed by using a blade with teeth to rake and break up the thick patches.

Now let's discuss **RENOVATION**.

Renovation refers to any procedure beyond normal maintenance that is required to upgrade an existing lawn. A deteriorated lawn is often a symptom of some underlying problem. So first you must identify the exact problem. If you renovate the lawn before you correct the problem your lawn will deteriorate again. Then all your time, effort and money will be wasted because you will need to renovate over and over. Some reasons for lawn deterioration may be; poor establishment at planting, improper lawn management, poorly adapted grasses, thatch buildup, disease, insect, or weed infestation. So once you have determined the problem, if it can't be corrected easily, it might be time to do a complete renovation of the problem area.

If you decide to renovate you will need to consider the following.

1. Can you correct the existing problem with improved maintenance procedures, or will you need to take out everything and start over in the problem area.
2. Realize that renovation will take time. Improved maintenances procedures may take weeks or longer to correct the problem. Starting over will take much longer.

If you decide to start over, some things to consider first would be to:

- Determine how you will eliminate the current vegetation.
- If redoing an entire lawn, determine what grass you will be planting and prepare to plant during the correct season for that grass.
- Allow enough time before planting to do a soil test, review results, and amend the soil to prepare for a healthy start.
- Prepare a good seedbed. Loosen soil, fill in low areas, and smooth surfaces so that surface clods are smaller than marbles.

Now you will be ready to replant using the information about starting a new lawn that we discussed earlier.

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Lawn Alternatives

Ideas

- Outdoor living space for entertaining
- Play area or pool area
- Butterfly/pollinator garden
- Natural or native plant area
- Groundcover area
- Flower garden
- Vegetable or herb garden



[For more ideas go to NC Extension Gardener Handbook Chapter 19](#)

Have you ever thought about using some Lawn Alternatives in your landscape. A lawn alternative would be putting something in a space that would not be grass. Think about this.

Lawns are not just about the grass. Consider your lawn to be an extension of your home. It is your outdoor living space where all kinds of activities may take place.

Just as you have rooms on the inside of the house there are rooms on the outside of your house. So add some variety to your landscape and you can cut down on the grass mowing.

So, what are some possible alternative areas that may be added to your landscape? Let's look at these Ideas. (Read slide info.)

Can you think of other areas that you might include into the landscape that would fit the needs or interests of your family?

For more information on these and other ideas check out Chapter 19 of the Extension Gardener Handbook and read more about Lawn Alternatives.

Integrated Pest Management – IPM

[Extension Gardener Handbook Chapter 8](#)

A balanced use of all available control methods to keep pests from reaching damaging levels.

Control Methods

- Mechanical Method
- Cultural methods
- Pesticides
- Combination

A Word About Pesticides
The label is the law! Read the label!



Kathleen Moore CC BY - 2.0

We touched on IPM a little earlier. So, let's look more specifically at IPM to get a general idea of what it means.

IPM is "A balanced..... Read from slide

What are pests? Pests in your lawn could be anything from weeds to insects.

What are some control methods for pests? There are four control methods. Mechanical, Cultural, Pesticides and a combination of methods.

1. Mechanical control is physical control. Pulling weeds. Catching and disposing of insects.
2. Cultural methods are things we can do to change things in the area by creating an unfavorable environment for the pest. Ex. Seeding and keeping grass healthy is a way to push out weeds. Or maybe you could plant specific plants in the landscape that would discourage various insects.
3. The use of Pesticides is a chemical method where you would apply chemical products to the lawn for control of the problem, such as pre/post emergent products for weed control or specified products for insect control.

But before using chemicals make sure it is the best option for the problem.

4. Then finally a combination method of control would be to use all three of the above methods and not use just one of them. This approach is much more effective.

I'm sure you see this big red statement.

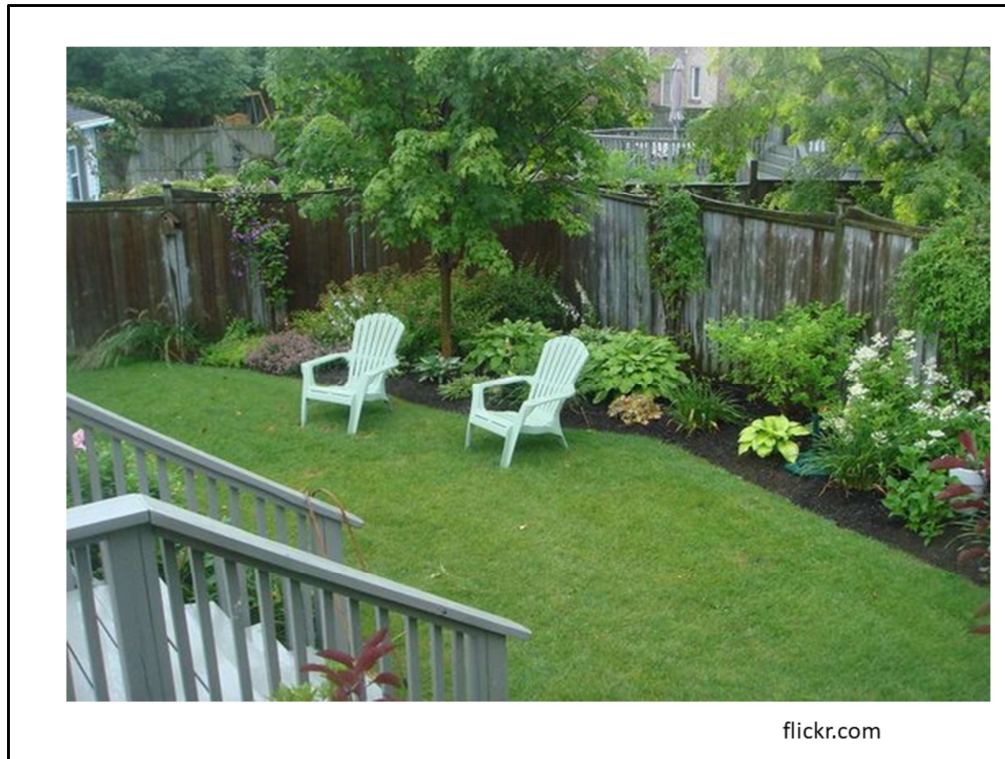
This statement cannot be emphasized enough when you are considering using a pesticide.

"A word about pesticides, The label is the law! Read the label!"

The label will tell you when, how, and where you are to use the product. It will discuss safety measures and precautions.

It will also emphasize that in using the product you are assuming all responsibilities that go along with any misuse of the product. So read and be careful.

Follow the label precisely to protect not only yourself, but your children, your friends and neighbors, your pets, our wildlife and the environment.



How does this backyard look? Don't we all just want to go out and relax in this setting?

So, to have a place like this for ourselves, we have learned that our first step to a healthy and beautiful lawn begins with planning.

It sounds like a lot, doesn't it? But, it all doesn't have to all be done in one season. Plan your landscape in stages. Complete one part of your dream at a time. Know that your landscape will be an everchanging part of your home as your family's interests and needs changeover time.

But most importantly, you should know that you are not alone. HC Cooperative Extension Services are here to help you.

You may call to ask questions and get information. Use the Extension website to look for upcoming workshops and training sessions. Follow us on facebook for short informative videos and information links. And don't forget to use the online resources from NCSU about thousands of researched topics.

In closing I would like to remind you that you will find the links to all the resources I have mentioned in the presentation on the resource page for today's webinar.

I hope you have gained some helpful information from this presentation. Thank-you for joining us.

Notes to self:

STOP SHARE - at top mid-right.