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Spring Yard Care Questions From Readers

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A weekly question/answer column

Spring Yard Care Questions From Readers

Specialists answer:

April 12, 2001

Question: I have been searching for a Globe Maple (globosum) for my landscape. I can't find this tree anywhere and I am quite desperate and would appreciate any help you could give me in locating one.
Answer: There are several different maple species with cultivars called "Globosum." They include Norway Maple, Red Maple, and Sugar Maple. If you are in Utah, the tree you want is: Acer platanoides "Globosum" (Norway Maple variety Globosum). If you can't find it in stock, you should be able to go to any full-service nursery and ask them to order one for you.
- Larry Rupp, Utah State University Extension Horticulture Specialist

Question: Last October we purchased three 7-foot pine trees from a nursery. We planted them successfully in our yard. I just noticed this weekend that some of the branches towards the bottom look like they're dying (turning color, appear to be drying out). Is this normal after winter? Or would it be a sign that the trees haven't received enough water during the winter?
Answer: It depends on which needles are dying. If it is the older needles (those closer to the center of the tree) you are probably okay. If the young needles near the tips of the branches are dying, then there is most likely a problem. At this point, I would recommend that you wait until spring and see if there is healthy new growth from the tips. It is not uncommon to have some stress during transplanting, but if you get good new growth you should be okay. Conifers can dry out during the winter, and it is hard to say without knowing your local conditions. In general most pines should be okay unless we get a cold, windy winter with little precipitation.
- Larry Rupp, Utah State University Extension Horticulture Specialist

Question: How often should I use the mulching blade in my mower? Is every time I mow OK?
Answer: Mulching blades may be used every time you mow as long as the lawn is not allowed to get too long between mowings. In the spring, when the grass is rapidly growing, you will need to mow more frequently or bag or rake the clippings. When the grass becomes high or you try to cut off too much at one time, the mulch blade cannot do its job. Later in the summer when it is hot and the grass slows down, it is not a problem.
- Rick Heflebower, Utah State University Extension Washington County Horticulture Agent

Question: What can you tell me about Turtle Grass--value, strengths, weaknesses, how and where to plant, etc?
Answer: Turtle Grass is fairly new to us here in southern Utah. There are some pros and cons. It requires less water and fertilizer to maintain good color. However, It does not appear to be as durable (doesn't repair itself well)as bluegrass or tall fescue, so it would not be a good choice for a backyard, for example, where children would be playing. USDA researchers indicate that it

would probably do well in an arid climate but, in places of high humidity it may not have good disease tolerance.

It is something we hope to do a little testing with here in the future. Turtle Grass sod is fairly expensive (almost double the price of regular sod).

- *Rick Heflebower, Utah State University Extension Washington County Horticulture Agent*

Question: Will the Prairie cultivar of Buffalo grass do well in the Grantsville (Tooele County) area? If not, which grass would be best for a new home? My goal is to conserve water and minimize the number of mowings each summer. Also would you recommend Meyer Zoysia grass for this area?

Answer: The cultivars that you noted are not the best for this area. The winter may kill the Prairie cultivar of Buffalo grass. A better choice would be 609 or Legacy. 609 will remain green longer than Legacy and you would water them normally about every 10 to 14 days during the hot part of the summer. They both will brown earlier in the fall than Kentucky Blue and stay brown longer in the spring than Kentucky Blue. Zoysia grass of any kind is not recommended for this climate. They are warm season grasses and do not do well here.

- *Wade Bitner, Utah State University Extension Salt Lake County Horticulture Agent*

Question: I have a lawn full of spiders. When I go to the flowers beds, probably a 100 spiders run out of the grass and bed. The spiders are about 3/8 of an inch long and dark brown. I would just like to get rid of them. What is the best approach?

***Answer*:** These spiders are not harmful to humans. Spiders actually benefit humans by eating harmful insects that injure our grasses and plants that we wish to cultivate. Please be nice to our environment and let the spiders do what they know best. This is a very natural approach.

- *Jay Karren, Utah State University Extension Entomology Specialist*