

The week ahead

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| <p>TUESDAY
HEALTHY LIVING</p> <p>CLASS TIME: Local teacher's innovative style is packing in the exercisers</p> | <p>WEDNESDAY
TASTE</p> <p>COOKIES, WITH LOVE: Four foodies share their favorite family cookie recipes</p> | <p>NEXT WEEK
HOME</p> <p>HALLOWEEN: From goblets to lanterns, spiders, witches and pumpkins go traditional in a fresh way</p> |
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Today on dallasnews.com

- Physical peak**
Video: Rock-climbing workout is a challenging and fun way to get fit fast.
[dallasnews.com/lifestyles](#)
- Great pumpkins**
Audio/slideshow: Hear author Susan Warren read an excerpt from her book, and see photos of giant pumpkins.
[dallasnews.com/lifestyles](#)



Cookie database

Online: Ready to bake? Search here for the top cookie recipes from 11 years of our Holiday Cookie Contest. Choose a category or type a keyword.
[dallasnews.com/cookie recipes](#)

HOME

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CHORES

Get lawn fed before long winter's nap

By RICK ROSEN
 Staff Writer
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Time is running out to apply chemical fertilizer to your lawn (though you have more time if you use organic fertilizer). But why fertilize in fall, when your grass will just go dormant anyway in a couple of months?

Spreading nitrogen fertilizer in fall helps your lawn resist winter weeds, improves fall color and strengthens your yard for spring, says Texas Cooperative Extension. But, for North Texas, this is considered the last weekend to apply it so that the lawn will fully use it.

If you didn't in spring, measure your yard, so you'll know the exact amount of fertilizer you need. Applying too much can mean that quite a bit ends up in the water supply.

Get a long tape measure and walk off each section of lawn. Add up the measurements to get the total area of the lawn in square feet. (If you keep the total-square-foot figure in a place you'll remember, then you'll only have to do this task once.) Then use the calculator at bottom.

Texas Cooperative Extension recommends using a fertilizer that represents a 4-1-2 ratio of nitrogen to phosphorus and potassium. Many local soils, according to the turf experts at Extension, already have enough phosphorus and potassium. To find out about your soil, you can have your soil tested. (See accompanying box.)

Organic experts emphasize a long-range program of building up your soil to avoid the need for fertilizer. But for short-range help, organic garden shops sell fertilizer with natural ingredients.

Natural fertilizers include alfalfa meal, corn gluten meal, cottonseed meal and soybean meal, seaweed products and manure. Organic proponents say you don't have to be as concerned with timing and amount when you apply organic fertilizers as you do with chemical ones.

Paul Tukey, author of *The Organic Lawn Care Manual* (Storey Publishing, \$19.95 paperback) says: "The good news about all these natural products is the built-in safety net. Burning your lawn or harming the environment is difficult when you take synthetic fertilizer out of the equation. That's because the concentrations of nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus are far lower with natural products. Some people may see this as a negative; it's not, though. Naturally occurring nutrients break down more slowly in the soil and therefore last longer."

HOW MUCH FERTILIZER?

To calculate how much fertilizer to buy, based on amount of nitrogen, here's a chart prepared by Texas Cooperative Extension. The application depends on many factors, including type of grass, whether it is in shade, and more.

In the chart, the first number is the percentage of nitrogen, which is always the first number on a bag of fertilizer. The other two numbers, representing phosphorus and potassium, do not need to be considered in this equation.

Fertilizer bag reads	Nitrogen to apply per 1,000 sq. feet
6-X-X	8.3 lbs.
8-X-X	6.2 lbs
9-X-X	5.5 lbs.
15-X-X	3.3 lbs.
20-X-X	2.5 lbs.
21-X-X	2.4 lbs.

As an example, take an 8-2-4 fertilizer: Divide the amount of nitrogen you want to add (we're using 1/2 pound per 1,000 feet) by the percentage of nitrogen in the fertilizer (8 percent in this example).

Divide 0.5 (half of 1 is 0.5) by 0.08, which equals 6.25 pounds of fertilizer.

If, for example, your yard measures 3,000 square feet, divide 3,000 by the 1,000 square feet base measurement. That gives you 3. Multiply 3 by 6.25.

You get 18.75 pounds. So, to get enough nitrogen to apply 1/2 pound per 1,000 square feet of lawn, you would need to buy 18.75 pounds of the 8-2-4 fertilizer.

GET A SOIL TEST KIT

If you can wait, there is another task that is vital to determining the correct amount: Get a soil test. The test takes about two weeks and shows the amount of nutrients in the soil, thus telling you which and how much to add. The Texas County Extension has kits.

Analysis fee: \$10 to \$30
Call: 214-904-3050 (Dallas office); or 972-548-4233 (metro 972-424-1460, ext. 4233) for the Collin County office

DigitalEXTRA

Links: Go online for a fertilizer calculator from Texas A&M University.
[dallasnews.com/home](#)

No how-to with the nematodes?

I just bought nematodes, but I don't how to use them.

J.M., Cleburne

If the instructions were not included with the product, return it and shop somewhere else.

Any store that sells nematodes should have the proper instructions for mixing and applying them. The store also should have a microscope to show you that the nematodes are alive before you buy them.

I live in a zero-lot-line development. My neighbor has morning glory vines that are spreading onto our shared fence and into my shrubs and flower beds. I don't know what to do other than spray Roundup to stop the invasion.

J.C., Dallas

Roundup doesn't work well on broadleaf plants, and it is a toxic herbicide. So forget that idea.

Remove the invaders by hand. Next, apply dry molasses to the soil at a rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet followed by a 1/2-inch layer of compost. If new morning glory sprouts appear later, spray them with a vinegar solution as they emerge from the ground.

To make a vinegar herbicide,

ORGANIC ANSWERS



HOWARD GARRETT
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mix 1 gallon of 10 percent vinegar, 1 ounce of orange oil or d-limonene, 1 tablespoon of molasses and 1 teaspoon of a mild liquid soap. Shake the mixture well before spraying. This spray works best on warm to hot days. It will damage any plant it touches, so spot-spray only what you want to kill.

I own and operate a small hydromulching business and have had requests to use my machine to hydromulch molasses or corn gluten meal on residential and commercial properties. How would this work, or would it work? How much would I apply?

J.H., Dallas

That's an interesting idea. You would need to calibrate the machine and mixture to apply 20 pounds of dry molasses and 20 pounds of corn gluten meal per 1,000 square feet.

This might be a good way to apply these products and get the maximum benefit quickly. Adding fine-textured compost or a turf food such as Soil Mender Turf-Mate would be even better. If you don't find this product in stores, the manufacturer's Web site is [www.soilmender.com](#).

My house has a pier and beam foundation. I have a problem with rats digging under the foundation perimeter and running amok under the house and inside the walls. Is there a repellent I can use? My neighbor has a cat that prowls around my house, and I do not want to harm him.

E.B., Dallas

Hot pepper and garlic would be worth trying. Putting out dry forms and spraying liquid versions repels rodents.

RESOURCES

- ONLINE:** [www.dirtdoctor.com](#) for free organic-program handouts
RADIO: KSKY-AM (660), Saturday 11 a.m.-noon and Sunday 8-11 a.m. [www.ksky.com](#).
MAIL: P.O. Box 140650, Dallas, TX 75214

PASS IT ON

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OFFERINGS

Rebuilt straight-stitch sewing machine. Industrial quality. Includes table. Call after 6:30 p.m. Kirsten, Dallas, 972-980-4486.

Wooden swing set. Includes slide. Good condition. You disassemble and remove. Call after 8:30 a.m. Claudia, Dallas, 214-212-3179.

Sidlinger trampoline. Professional quality. Needs a weld on the frame and a new 6-foot-by-9-foot bed. You haul. John, Dallas, 214-826-6492.

Kloss Novabeam One 6 1/2-foot TV. Call after 10 a.m. Jim, Garland, 214-202-5952.

Sigrid Mureen

Point, click, sold: Antiques stores feel pinch, too

By KEVIN GILES
 Minneapolis Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — Ask Marianne Kelly about the glory years in the antiques business, and she'll tell about the day Mary Travers of the legendary folk group Peter, Paul and Mary came all the way to Mill Antiques in Stillwater, Minn., in search of a blue-metal butter churn.

Or when Liberace, the flamboyant piano-playing celebrity, showed up in a limo to find just the right table.

But those days are gone, gone with the antiques trade as grandma knew it.

Upheaval is evident as prices fall, longtime dealers drop out, and a storm of imitations hits the retail market. Much of the antiques trade has moved to Ebay.com and other Internet sites. "The dealer sales were going down because there just wasn't the same interest in antiques," says Ms. Kelly, 71, who last month closed her Minnesota shop.

These days, fewer younger people care about antiques, preferring to buy new. And baby



Pop culture, not antique furniture, is more likely to interest young collectors.

boomers seem more inclined to collect novelties from their childhood years, such as theme lunchboxes, than to invest in pricey furniture built 100 years ago or more.

Such changes have "devastated the industry," says Philip Davies, whose national online newsletter, Tias.com, buzzed this summer with bloggers' first-hand examples of the difficulty of selling antiques. "It's amazing to me that an entire brick-and-mortar industry is actually dying on the vine." Kevin Holmgren has bought and

auctioned antiques for 32 years. He says the decline began about six years ago and gained speed to the point where he's trying to figure out how to make money.

"You need five or six pieces of pie to survive nowadays," says Mr. Holmgren, who even sells antiques off the back of a truck to compete in a market where imitations of popular antiques are imported from China. "Now everybody has a digital camera, everybody has a computer. They don't need the middleman anymore."

But what's bad for dealers

might be good for consumers looking for deals. Mr. Davies says the average price of antiques sold on Ebay.com fell from \$50 to \$27 in recent years. People are more comfortable with buying antiques online, he says, and shipping large items such as dining room tables.

Hot items on the antiques market today include Hot Wheels cars from the 1970s, vintage fishing lures and lunch boxes from the 1960s television show *Hogan's Heroes* that fetch \$400, says Mr. Holmgren. But collectibles like wagon wheels and milk cans rarely sell anymore, and nobody wants antique glassware.

Mr. Davies says he's concerned that while baby boomers have been the antiques market's best customers in recent years, they'll soon want to unload their own possessions as they grow older. "We're about to see a flood of new merchandise coming to the market," he says. "And where are the new collectors coming from who are going to buy this stuff?"

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