

McCullough Landscape Guide

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Overview

The purpose of this guide is to provide McCullough homeowners general guidance on maintenance and upkeep of their lawns, shrubs, trees, and irrigation throughout the year.

McCullough has three (3) designated areas of homes:

- **North Carolina Single Family (NCSF)** - These homes receive some general front yard maintenance and upkeep with their HOA landscaping dues including:
 - Front yard mowing
 - Pruning three times during the year
 - Spring pre-emergent
 - Fall aeration and seeding
 - Pine needles (approximately 7 bales per home) twice a year
 - NCSF homeowners are responsible for maintenance and upkeep of their backyards (both inside and outside of fenced area) and any additional front yard maintenance needed
- **South Carolina Single Family (SCSF)** - These homeowners are responsible for maintaining all of their landscaping
- **McCullough Townhomes (MT)** - the McCullough Townhome HOA maintains all landscaping for townhome owners

Seasonal Landscape Guidance & Recommendations

This section provides key maintenance and upkeep that should be completed by season. For NCSF homeowners, it will be noted when the service is provided by the landscape company for front lawns. Unless noted, homeowners are responsible.

Winter

The following should take place in mid November/early December timeframe prior to the first frost:

Routine Landscape Care

- Mowing should be at 3 inches and clear of debris, whether clumps of grass or leaves, to allow airflow and prevent lawn disease
NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns
- Lawn should only be watered as needed to prevent excessive drying (aiming for 1 inch of water a week)

Winter Prep

- Irrigation lines should be winterized, blown out to prevent cracks in plastic lines from frozen water. Please research a company or some DIY videos to perform this work yourself.
- Winter fertilizer - Look for a fertilizer that is specialized for the winter months.

NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns

Spring

As we head into Spring, the following should take place to get your landscape prepared for the summer heat:

Routine Landscape Care

- Mowing should be at 3 inches
NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns
- Lawn should only be watered as needed to prevent excessive drying (aiming for 1 inch of water a week)
- Fertilizer & Weed treatment- Put pre-emergent and fertilizer on your lawns to prevent weed growth and get your lawn off to a good start
NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns

Spring Prep

- Shrubs and trees - Before the last frost, trim back any fast growing shrubs and trees. This is a great time to put fertilizer spikes to help your bushes and trees thrive.
NCSF Note: US Lawns will have bushes pruned and pine needles installed prior to Memorial Day
- Irrigation- De-winterize your sprinkler system after the last frost. Do a test run to check for broken irrigation heads or leaks

Summer

Summer is where everyone is primarily in survival mode.

Routine Landscape Care

- Mowing should be at 4 inches
NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns
- Lawn should only be watered as needed to prevent excessive drying (aiming for 1 inch of water a week)
- Summer fertilizer - Consider applying a low dosage nitrogen to fuel your lawn and keep it green
NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns

Summer Survival

- When you see rust/mushrooms/brown patch, consider applying fungicide
Tip: Homeowners will need to play a delicate balance of enough water to keep the soil moist but not too wet to promote fungus/mushrooms/etc.

- Weed treatment-. Spot treat only for weeds to prevent stressing out the entire lawn.
- Eradicating bermuda - Bermuda is an invasive warm season grass that can spread several feet above and underground. When spotted, homeowners will want to dig the entire root system out and/or spray selective herbicides

Tip: Recommend spraying infected area with Ornamec 170 and a surfactant

Fall

For the tall fescue found throughout the neighborhood, the fall is the most important time of the year to do everything you can to set yourself up for success. Thatch removal, soil preparations, core aerations, overseeding, and starter fertilizers are some of the many things that you should have performed on your lawns. You will also want to keep an eye out for seasonal insects (beetles, grubs, etc.) that could pose a threat to the health of your lawn.

Routine Landscape Care

- Mowing should initially be at 4 inches and gradually decrease to 2.5 or 3 inches for renovation work
NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns
- Lawn should only be watered as needed to prevent excessive drying (aiming for 1 inch of water a week)

Thatch Removal

If your lawn has a thick layer of dead grass from mulching or dead patches, you may want to consider dethatching your lawn to extract the excessive amount of debris. Not doing this could prevent successful seed germination if it can't find the soil.

Soil Prep

Our lawns in the Carolina piedmont are of a sandy loam variety and not very nutrient dense or supportive towards turf grasses. Before seeding, consider adding a layer of nutrient dense compost or soil to your yard (a.k.a. Top dressing) so you can level out your yard while also adding a layer of healthy soil to your yard over time.

Core Aeration

Core aeration is done either manually or mechanically to extract plugs of dirt from your yard to loosen the soil, help aerate the yard, and strengthen your lawn's root system

NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns

Overseeding

Tall fescue does not natively spread like weeds and warm season grass types; because of this you will want to fill in any bare spots and broadcast seed over healthier areas to have a thick

and luxurious lawn. Overseeding in the fall also allows fescue to grow deep root systems in the cooler weather (fall and following spring) before being stressed during the summer time. After seeding it is crucial to make sure you're watering appropriately so that the seeds are moist, not dry and not drenched, to germinate within a couple weeks. You'll want to begin cutting your new grass once it is just above the highest setting on your mowers (approximately 4-6 weeks after seeding).

NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns

Tip: Watering should be adjusted to more frequent and shorter duration for the first two weeks of germination. You'll need to monitor and just your watering based on how much sun the yard has to prevent soaking or dried out grass seed.

Tip: You'll want to overseed after the evening temperatures are below 70 degrees so the soil temperatures are cool and within optimal range for germination. This could extend typical seeding to late October.

Starter Fertilizer

After overseeding, you will want to provide the seeds with the nutrients it readily needs to grow fast and strong. You may find some products at big box stores combine seeds and fertilizer so keep an eye out on what the NPK ratios are for whatever you're applying.

NC SF Note: US Lawns does provide this service to your front lawns

Tip: When fertilizing, make sure you don't put down excessive amounts of nitrogen otherwise that can burn the yard.

Tree/Shrub Fertilizer

The fall weather is an ideal time to apply general fertilizer to improve growth and root systems before going dormant in the winter.

Landscaping

Vegetation (Flowers, Ground Cover, Shrubs and Trees)

Per our neighborhood NLS standards, flowers, shrubs and trees may be planted without an ARC in existing landscape beds as long as the number does not exceed 6. Additionally, healthy plants and flowers in pots that blend with the exterior color of the house may be placed on the front porch without an ARC as long as the number of pots does not exceed 9. Quantities above the stated number must be reviewed and approved through the ARC process.

Pruning Trees/Shrubs

It is recommended to prune your trees and shrubs during the winter and early spring while the trees/shrubs are dormant.

Trees along the sidewalks should be pruned for an 8ft clearance so that there's no obstructions to pedestrians and cars on the street or sidewalk.

NCSF Note: US Lawns does provide pruning service for the shrubs and trees located in the front yard.

Edging and Bed Covers

Per our neighborhood NLS standards, edging around your landscaped beds can be trenches and structured walls as long as the materials and sizes used have been approved through the ARC process.

For bed covers, black/brown mulch and pinestraw are the only types to be used.

Fences and Surrounding Landscape

Although fences owned by homeowners are not serviced or overseen by the landscape committee, it should be noted that fences should be periodically cleaned/stained/painted to upkeep its intended look. Additionally, grass and landscaping around the fences should be maintained similar to that of the rest of the property.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Weeds

Simply put, if you come across some grass type or weed in your lawn and want it gone fast, just dig it up. It's recommended to pull weeds when the ground is saturated so the roots stay intact when pulled. Applying proper doses of pre-emergent in the spring are key to reduce the volume of weeds the rest of the year.

For herbicides, this is a high-level overview:

When you see x type of weed, apply z herbicide:

- Nutsedge - This yellowish grass is tricky because it is easy to pull however pulling leaves seeds behind to multiply. It is recommended to use a selective herbicide.
- Crabgrass - Quinclorac is the recommended herbicide concentrate for crabgrass. Homeowners can dig up crabgrass easily.
- Clover - 2,4-d is the recommended broadleaf herbicide for clover. Tricky to dig.
- Kudzu vine - 2,4-d is the recommended broadleaf herbicide for kudzu. This is very invasive (you see it all along the roads and forest areas), act fast!

Landscaping

How often should mulch/pinestraw be applied? Typically a mulched flower bed should receive a top coating every year as the mulch degrades throughout the year. For pinestraw, every 6 months is recommended to keep the top coat bright and fresh.

Can I use rock instead of mulch or pinestraw? No. The board and Standards committee has completed ample research and determined rock, regardless of its color, is not beneficial for the neighborhood or compliant with the standards.

Who can I contact for damage to my landscaping/lawn/fence from the landscape company? If the offending party is US Lawns, please contact mccullough@uslawnsnc.com and also cc landscape@mcculloughhoa.com so that the Landscape Committee can stay informed and assist as needed. If the offending party is privately contracted through a neighbor, please work with your neighbor on a solution.

Irrigation

What do I do if there's a leak or a zone isn't operating correctly at one of the parks or common spaces? Please contact the Landscape committee at landscape@mcculloughhoa.com to inform them of what you've observed. If the irrigation system has a leak, busted head, or incorrect configuration then our community will suffer its' beauty and cost more to repair the longer it goes unnoticed.

What do I do if a neighbor has a leak or irrigation issue? We recommend reaching out to the neighbor to let them know in case they didn't see it yet and they can take the steps to correct it. Leaks after the master valve and within the irrigation system itself are only an issue when the system or a given zone is running. All irrigation parts are made of cheap plastic and the expected lifespan is approximately 7 years for each component. Leaks before the master valve are a problem that will leak constantly and "emergency" services should be sought out to prevent an expensive water bill. Any irrigation issues mean your system is not running efficiently and some portions of your yard may be over or under watered causing more problems.

Who can I contact for irrigation help? We can't recommend a specific company over another but there are several neighbors that have shared contact information of those that have helped them in the past. You may also find that several neighbors offer assistance themselves as independent contractors.

Resources

Fescue Calendar maintenance:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/tall-fescue-maintenance-calendar/>

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/tall-fescue-lawn-maintenance-calendar>

Weed Control:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/lawn-weed-control-timing-chart/>