

What's Going On Under The Snow?

Every season, the snow melts and we get numerous calls about some type of critter that was active underneath the snow pack. I hope this article will address your questions and concerns regarding the condition of your lawn.

The most common critter moving under the cover of the snow is a vole. It is sometimes called a meadow mouse, or a meadow vole. It is an herbivore which chews the grass off in tracks measuring about one inch wide. After the snow melts, the tracks have the appearance of a garden hose left on the lawn for an extended period of time. In some cases, voles will chew grass in a large area, and the grass actually looks dead. As voles chew the grass in the tracks, they continue to run back and forth making what appears to be a depression in the dirt. I can assure you that with the arrival of warm weather, and the growth of the grass, the tracks will disappear.

Another critter which is active under the snow pack is a mole, which is not to be confused with a vole. A mole is an insectivore. It spends one hundred percent of its life underground. These critters live in tunnels just under the surface. They monitor their tunnels for any intruders. Earthworms and grubs make up most of their diet, and fall victim when they enter the tunnel. The dirt from each tunnel is pushed up and deposited on the surface, creating little mounds all over the lawn.

The third possible problem going on underneath the snow pack is snow mold, a disease which occurs in temperatures ranging from 27 to 45 degrees. It is often found when there is excessive moisture from melting snow or excessive rainfall. Brown circular patches start to appear in the lawn. The grass appears matted over in these areas. The grass will continue to decline, and the snow mold will spread, as long as the conditions are favorable for development. Lawns facing north are subject to slower melting snow. Those lawns might have more snow mold problems.



VOLES



MOLES



SNOW MOLD



Congratulations to our Round 6, 2016
Word Puzzle Winner!

**John Mastropietro
of New Castle, PA**

won a gift certificate to
Dona Vito's Italian Grille.

WORD JUMBLE WEEDS

LVROCE

NNDEADOLI

ESTITLH

SGRABULES

SLOIAX

This problem weed germinates in late spring/early summer and leaves large voids in the lawn when it dies in the fall. It could also be described as the grumpiest of all weeds....



Name: _____ Phone: _____ Address: _____

Please submit your Word Jumble entry form to The Lawn Ranger for a chance to win a gift certificate to Dona Vito's Italian Grille. The winner will be drawn at the end of our Round 1 service.



KEMOSABI

Round 1
Spring 2017

NEWS

THE EARLY BIRD OF SPRING

Unless snow plowing is a big part of your yearly income, this was a great winter. As I write this newsletter, the high today is scheduled to be sixty-five degrees and it is late February. My grass as I am sure yours, still has color which leads me to believe everything is going to start a little earlier this year. I think the soil temperatures will heat up a little faster which means, we may be cutting a little earlier. When making your first few cuts this Spring, there are a few things you can do to get your lawn going in the right direction. Make sure your mower is tuned up and your blade has been sharpened and balanced. Mow the lawn as short as you can without scalping it. This will create air circulation and also aide in recovery, if snow mold is present. If snow mold is present and you have some time to get outside, there is something you can do to help the lawn recover. When going through your lawn, if you see any matted, irregular shaped, pink, gray or yellow spots, you have snow mold. Simply lightly rake these areas to get the grass to separate and stand up. You may get some grass blades to come out, but this is just the blade and the lawn will be fine. By doing this, you will create air circulation, which will speed up the recovery period. Even if your first application has been applied you can still rake these areas without affecting the treatments. Do not over do it on the raking, only lightly rake the grass to get the grass separated. Just because we did not have a lot of snow does not affect whether snow mold will be an issue. This disease has more to do with the amount of moisture in the lawn rather than the amount of snow on it. Although all cool season grasses can be affected by snow mold, bent grass and turf type tall fescue seem to be most susceptible. This leads me to a few questions about the first application that we most frequently get.

Can I seed after the treatment? Yes you can but you need to break the barrier first and there are two ways to do this. You can rake the area with a hand rake which will break the barrier and then apply the seed. The other way is to bring in top soil and top dress the areas and then apply the seed and you should have success. When the new grass germinates you may get some crabgrass along with what you seeded because the barrier has been broken. If you see this, just pull it out so room can be made for the desirable grass. The only way crabgrass can germinate is if the barrier is broken, and as a home owner you can be doing this without even knowing.

There are zero products that are going to work 100%. When it comes to what is applied there can always be a percentage of product failure or breakdown. Herbicides, fungicides and insecticides are designed to work in a normal growing season. Unfortunately all growing seasons are not normal. So many factors can increase or decrease the chances of how well a product works. If we get too much rain or not enough rain, the way the product works can change. If we get too much heat and the grass slows in growth, it can also alter how well a product works. These are things we cannot control, but we as a company can rectify. There are things we can control to help the success of a product. In regards to the crabgrass preventer, weed whacking and edging along curbs, drives and all hand surfaces can cause product failure. That is why crabgrass generally grows on the edges along with other weeds. Our round one product has 2.5 times the amount of active ingredient recommended, so we do not expect failure. If by chance the barrier is broken and the crabgrass pops up, we can take care of it when your treatment date comes.

Outside of what I have covered, there is not a lot going on in the Spring since the grass is just coming out of dormancy. Once the growing season starts is when the real action begins. Remember, we are here to help. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to call. Our office staff is very knowledgeable and can answer most questions. We at The Lawn Ranger thank you for the chance to give you the best lawn you can have.



The Lawn Ranger Is Here To Protect And Service Your Lawn

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330-536-6630 • 1-877-536-6630 • 330-758-8676



WEED IDENTIFICATION GUIDE



White Clover is a winter perennial which spreads by above ground runners. The plant has compound leaves divided into three leaflets which are all joined at a central point. It adapts to many soils but tends to grow best in moist soils. It flowers from May through September.



Thistle is a perennial weed that has soft green, spear-like leaves with sharp barbs on them and is a difficult weed to control. It grows on an extensive root system that can go quite deep into the ground and the plant can grow back from even a small piece of root.



Purslane is a summer annual with thick and waxy leaves that usually alternate, with a cluster at the tip. Stems are thick, reddish in color, and branch out from a central point. It flowers from May to November and spreads by seeds, which germinate in the spring, or by stem fragments.



Oxalis is a summer annual, that can be perennial in some areas. Sometimes mistaken for clover when not in flower, the leaves differ from clover in that they are distinctly heart shaped. It is yellow with five petals and occurs in clusters. It spreads by seeds which burst from the pods at maturity and may be scattered several feet.



Yellow Nutsedge has a triangular stem with waxy grass-like leaves and an upright growth habit. Sedges are not grass plants, but may be mistaken for such. A nutsedge tuber can produce 1,900 plants and 7,000 new tubers in a single growing season. Nutsedge does well where soil has poor drainage.



Dandelion is a winter perennial with leaves that form in a rosette. The flowers are yellow and are individual stems. The yellow flower will turn to a white globular puffball. The seeds are disseminated by wind. Dandelions spread by both seed and stems from the root.



Bluegrass is a small tufted, yellow-green winter annual. The leaf blades are smooth on both surfaces, with two distinct, clear lines. The leaf tips are long and slightly pointed. It is light green to whitish with spikelets that are arranged on branches, in dense to open flower clusters.



Crabgrass is a summer annual that germinates when soil temperatures reach a consistent 55° and is generally killed at the first frost. It is light green in color and coarse bladed. It grows especially well in thin lawns that do not get enough water, and are poorly drained.



Chickweed is a winter annual which grows in moist shaded areas. The leaves are small, smooth and pointed at the tip. Chickweed adapts well to different mowing heights and spreads by seed. The flowers of common chickweed are white, small and star like with 5 petals.

What We Are Doing To Fight The Crabgrass

For the last few years, lawn care companies have struggled in getting crabgrass under control. It was never this bad in the past, but we think it will continue to be a major problem. There are a few reasons for the extensive crabgrass outbreak in mid to late summer every year:

1. Improper maintenance along the sidewalk and driveway edges.
2. Homeowners continue to mow short, long after the cutting height should have been raised.
3. Some lawn care companies buy low cost products with lower amounts of crabgrass preventer.
4. Early season applications don't last as long as later applications.



From 2007 to 2008, we increased the crabgrass preventer we applied by 44%. From 2009 to 2016, we increased the preventer by an additional 25%. The Lawn Ranger remains determined to keep this under control. The spring products we are applying will be applied at 4.00 pounds of actual product per thousand square feet. Later, Liquid Dimension applications are applied at a rate of 1.0 ounce per thousand square feet.

GRUBS in 2017



Over the past 17 years, our industry has done a tremendous job of introducing grub preventer products to help lawns stay healthy when these pests are active. Although these products are not 100% effective, they are in the 93–97% range and do a wonderful job. The amount of grub damage in lawns has been drastically reduced and this could only be attributed to these products. In The Lawn Ranger's experience, the only customers who had any type of damage are the customers who did not purchase this product. Most customers who choose not to receive this product are only deterred by the cost. When you spend money to have a beautiful lawn, then lose it to grub damage, the cost of this product is minute compared to the cost of repair. Your lawn will never look the same, from color to overall terrain. Predicting what this year will bring is impossible, but it is certainly better to be safe than sorry.

GRUB PREVENTER "Merit"

Grubs are the most destructive insect homeowners and lawn care applicators encounter. By the time actual damage appears on the surface, grubs have already consumed 90% of the root system. Grubs are attracted to any lawn with a thatch layer. One of the most successful methods of prevention is to apply a grub preventer called "MERIT".

Merit is one of the most widely used products, with nearly a 100% control rate. In fact, in the thousands of applications we have made, there have only been a few failures, and the grub activity was so minimal, damage would not have occurred.



When the grass is actively growing, our lawn treatments will go to work immediately. However, it can take three to four weeks for the weed to actually disappear. Weed control starts to work within a few hours, curling and distorting weeds which have been sprayed. The fertilizer pellets activate with the first rainfall and start to green and thicken the lawn. We use a two-step system which applies dry synthetic organic fertilizer (non-burning and safe in all temperatures) and a liquid weed control as needed. The Lawn Ranger uses the best available professional lawn care products. We do not cut rates or use any low quality liquid fertilizer products. The lawns we treat dominate over our competition on lasting color and thickness. Remember to use good cultural practices in mowing and watering. Raise the cutting height to the highest setting during the summer, and if you can't water, don't mow your lawn if it doesn't rain.