

TO MY VALUABLE CUSTOMER

Another growing season filled with ups and downs! It was dry coming out of the blocks this year then followed by above average rainfall. Many stressed lawns recovered and if you had a chance to over-seed this fall then it is a bonus. Other than incidental insect activity, most areas that did not rebound quickly had an excessive thatch layer in the turf or a sandy soil base. Consider soil aeration to improve turf growing conditions.

As mentioned two years ago, the European crane fly has settled in and continues to be a major pest in some areas of the county. They are replacing the white grub as the most troublesome and damaging insect on home lawns and golf course turf. It will remain to be seen what happens to the populations of this pest in the years ahead. I suspect some years will be more damaging than others.

Emerald ash borer is here and will remain here until they take out a major portion of our ash trees in the county. There are natural stands of ash that will go more quickly because there are so many so close to each other that will allow the critter to get from tree to tree more readily. Because of greater spacing between trees in the city and urban environment, we will see a slower but steady pace of tree mortality. This insect will kill ash trees much the same way we saw Dutch elm disease take out elm trees years ago. Thankfully, we have a product (Emamectin benzoate or “tree-age”) that can save valuable ash trees in your landscape. It works.

New studies at Cornell University are suggesting that additional application of potassium (K or potash) may lead to increased incidence of pink and gray snow mold. We will look more closely into this because, up until this point, K was considered a nutrient that thickens the cell walls of plant tissue and has been thought to be a good component of a “winterizer fertilizer”. There are too many factors to make a carte blanche statement about K in my opinion. Potash is very soluble and moves quickly through sandy soils which may lead to a K deficiency. Getting a broader study beyond the petri dish and onto different soil conditions and plant varieties may be needed before a halt to potash use is recommended. If it turns out that less of this nutrient is required then that would be a good thing as disease would be minimized, ground water quality would be less jeopardized and fertilizer costs should be reduced. You may know that the use of phosphorous on established turf is no longer allowed by state mandate. It has been determined that phosphorous is running off into our streams and lakes creating problems. Phosphorous will only be able to be applied on new lawns because it does encourage root growth and seedling establishment. These new parameters will lead lawn care professionals to tweak the nutrient regime necessary for your turf. We have water quality and environmental stability at the forefront of our concern when managing our landscapes. Please call with questions and THANK YOU for your business!

Best of the seasons to you and warmest of holidays!