

JANUARY

- Dormant under snow for the winter. Keep traffic off the frozen turf, since the delicate blades and crowns shatter underfoot.

FEBRUARY

- Still dormant through the deep freeze, nothing to do but let it rest.

MARCH

- Snowpack melts this month. Stay off the muddy turf to avoid ruts.

APRIL

- Good time for a soil test (every 2-3 years). It gets you set before fall, a cool-season lawn's biggest feeding.
- Soil hitting 50°F? Time for the first half of your split pre-emergent. Use a short-residual product so it clears in time for August seeding.

MAY

- Soil hits 55°F? Time for the second half.
- Light spring feeding (~0.5 lb N / 1,000 sq ft). Fine fescue needs to stay lean.
- Spot-treat broadleaf weeds, but only once air temps hold above 65°F.

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JUNE

- Raise your mower to 3" + to help the lawn handle summer heat.
- Good time for preventative grub control.

JULY

- Let the lawn go heat-dormant. Water ONLY about 0.25" every 2-3 weeks to keep the crowns alive, since heavy watering rots the roots.

AUGUST

- Late Aug: slit-seed any thin areas. NEVER core aerate, it shreds the delicate crowns.
- Apply starter fertilizer and mesotrione (Tenacity) with the seed. On fine fescue it can cause temporary whitening; the seedlings grow out of it.

SEPTEMBER

- Apply a light fall feeding (~0.5 lb N / 1,000 sq ft) once the seedlings establish.

OCTOBER

- Gradually drop your mowing height to 2.5".
- If you've had snow mold before, this is the time for a preventative fungicide (propiconazole).
- Skip the late-fall winterizer. Fine fescue doesn't need it.

NOVEMBER

- Ground freezes and the turf settles into full dormancy.

DECEMBER

- Dormant under snow, nothing to do until spring.

Good to know

Cool-season grass in USDA zone 3. Extremely low-nitrogen requirements. Delicate crowns mandate slit-seeding over core aeration. Enforce summer heat dormancy to prevent crown rot.

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