

# Chesapeake Lawn Science, Inc.

"Your Lawn Nutrition Experts"

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P.O. Box 369, Ashton, MD 20861 (301) 625-3232  
Maryland Department of Agriculture Applicators License # 25513  
Maryland Department of Agriculture Nutrient Management License # MDA-F 0127

Dear Client,

## **NEWS FLASH**

**2018 was the wettest year in AT LEAST 150 years, possibly many more (D.C. weather records only date back to 1872)!**

Needless to say, turf disease/fungus pressure was off the charts, however, lawns that received the full season fungicide program fared very well compared to those that did not. It's working!

Thank you for your trust in us and for giving us the opportunity to service your lawn in 2019. It has now been over 20 years since we treated our first lawn in 1995, working out of a little Mazda Miata convertible. As hard as it is to believe, that's no joke. I really did somehow manage to start this business with only a Miata for the first 6 months until I was finally able to put a down payment on a Ford pick-up truck. I can't even imagine how silly I must have looked but I'm very proud to say that there are still some of you who remember that. It has been a real honor to have worked for a number of you folks for nearly 25 years now. In 25 more years, I look forward to saying the same about many more of you. For our seasoned veterans, much of this letter contains information that you are already familiar with so reading it word for word may not be necessary. **However, I encourage ALL of you to review it because there is some new important information about how we can take your lawn to the next level, making it stronger and better looking than it is now.**

### **Important facts about our new treatments:**

- Stiltgrass and nimblewill treatments are **NOT** included in the Enchilada or in the Enchilada Plus, which are our two most popular lawn package choices.
- If you know that your lawn needs one or both of these treatments, simply add them to your pre-paid total. If you are not sure whether they will be of benefit to your lawn, please email or call us before sending in your pre-payment so you can discuss the individual needs of your lawn with us.
  
- The Enchilada and the Enchilada Plus will remain the same as last year.

### **Additional information:**

Our fungicide program is no longer available as 3, 4, or 5 months of protection. It consists of a mixture of liquid and / or granular products. The program now begins in late May and will protect your lawn from turf disease / fungus until early December. The cost for the fungicide program is seven times your regular application rate.

Another new idea we began offering our clients a few years ago, in order to help make incorporating a fungicide program into your lawn's plan more affordable, was to offer the **Enchilada**. It gives you almost all of the treatments we offer at an additional 5% savings on top of your 5% pre-payment savings, for a total

discount of 10%. Just over 25% of you regularly sign up on this plan.

For those of you who want to treat your lawn with our new steroid mycorrhizae mix and take advantage of the new late season grub control as well, we are offering the biggest discount we ever have. We call this package of lawn treatments the **Enchilada Plus**. It includes **ALL** of the treatments included in the traditional Enchilada along with the mycorrhizae and supplemental grub control. With this package, you can even save another 5% which will give you a grand total of a 15% discount when you pre-pay.

Those of you who do not choose the pre-payment option will receive monthly bills. This allows you to budget for our program by being billed in equal monthly installments from January – November (no December bill), rather than receiving invoices for varying amounts at sporadic times throughout the year. Many of you set us up on recurring payments via your bank, which saves you time. Your total annual cost will be exactly the same as it would be if we billed you for each application as it is done. **If you happen to move or need to cancel service for any other reason, you will be responsible to make a payment for the month in which you alert us to your cancellation. For example: If you cancel on May 5<sup>th</sup>, you will be responsible to make your monthly payment for the month of May. There can be NO exceptions to this policy.**

**For example :**

*Say your cost per treatment is \$100*

*You are billed for 11 treatments during the course of 1 year*

*Your total annual cost would be \$1100*

*You would be billed \$100 on or around the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month from January – November*

*There is no invoice in December*

If **crabgrass** was a problem in your lawn at all in 2018, be sure that you elect to have the 2nd pre-emergent done in 2019. Some years, depending upon heat and moisture, the pre-emergent product can break down before the end of summer. This has happened on a fairly large scale some summers because of extreme heat and/or moisture. A second application ensures consistent coverage during the proper time frame.

Something else worth mentioning in this opening section is that we provide an optional **surface insecticide** treatment for mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, spiders, ants, sod-webworms, crickets, & other pests. Compared to what a pest control company would charge, it is quite a bargain and very effective. Many of you who try it for a season, have it done each year after that because it does such a great job of keeping away the nuisance bugs. It controls both warm and cool season pests.

Throughout the year I am often asked if I know reputable companies that provide other services. I have enclosed a list of companies that I have hired in the past and personally had good luck with. “Good luck” takes into consideration both excellent work and reasonable prices. The list ranges from roofers to mechanics to a great barber with an arsenal of jokes and good humor. The list is based solely on quality and familiarity. I promise you that I do not receive any personal compensation in any form from anyone on the list. It is for your benefit only.

Our current program has been in place for over a decade now and is working great. However, due to certain weather conditions, we may have to switch up the timing a little bit on some treatments, as we have in the past. We may do the cool-season weed control over the winter (if it is mild) or do the lime treatment in the summer if it is too cold and/or snowy over the winter. Whatever the timing, the results will be just as effective.

**A bit of advice for the summer: spend your money on water instead of seed to repair dead grass in September.** This is really the best plan for your lawn. Your turf will be much stronger and far more attractive year after year. It takes new seed about 2-3 years to fully mature and produce maximum root structure. There are some of you who have never seen truly mature grass because it dies out with each summer’s drought and we have to regularly re-seed because the turf is not supplied with water when it needs it. I know that there are various reasons why some of you choose not to water and I am not judging you for this - I’m really not. I am

simply saying that from a financial / healthy lawn perspective, the money you spend on watering is more than made up for by not needing to seed over and over again each year and by not needing to apply a lot of peat moss top dressing to allow the seed to germinate. This way your lawn will be healthier and look better in the long run.

**I sincerely thank you for allowing us the privilege of working for you. For those of you who have been with us for many years, we truly appreciate your loyalty. A few hundred of you have been with us for more than ten years now and, as mentioned in the opening paragraph, some of you since our first year in business back in 1995. In a field that can have a large customer turnover rate, it makes me very proud to reflect on the past in such a positive way. Thank you for your business and, in many cases, your friendship. For our new customers, thank you for giving us the chance to prove to you that we really are the best lawn nutrition provider out there. We are still servicing over 1,000 residential homes. I know there is a lot of information in this packet, but it is all pertinent material. Please take a little time to read the full letter describing your lawn nutrition program for 2019.**

**This packet will cover the following important topics:**

1. Our standard lawn nutrition program for 2019
2. Optional applications/services: surface insecticide, summer fungicides, split pre-emergent crabgrass control apps, multiple treatments for wild violet & ground ivy, spring core aeration service with no seed, mycorrhizae inoculation of your turf roots, late summer grub control, and treatments to kill nimblewill and stiltgrass
3. A comprehensive list of very good service companies from different fields
4. How you can save 5%, 10% or even 15% on lawn service in 2019

**1. Our standard lawn nutrition program**

The program will consist of three fertilization applications, three weed control applications (1 pre-emergent & 2 post-emergent), two micro-nutrient applications with iron, one sub-surface insecticide application for grubs, a limestone application, and multiple treatments to kill nutsedge. The last few years we have also provided our clients with some additional applications 100% free because the weather allowed us the time to do so. Chances are, we will do the same in 2018. There are actually between 5 -10 additional treatments that should/could be done each season to ensure a 100% perfect lawn throughout the year. However, because these specialty products are more expensive, there comes a point when it is not cost effective or reasonable for the typical homeowner to spend twice as much on their lawn in a year. Because I am in the lawn nutrition business, I do need to have the perfect lawn (or at least close to it). If my lawn is thin and/or full of weeds, then my credibility as a lawn nutrition professional would justifiably be questioned. I mean, I wouldn't really trust a dentist if he had rotten teeth. Would you? I do over 20 applications a year on my lawn, including fertilizations, grub control, lime, insecticide, liquid iron apps., mycorrhizae, micronutrients, fungicides, and spot weed controls as needed. As a result of this intensive application schedule, I can humbly say that my lawn is about as close to perfect as possible. The only exceptions are the areas that don't receive enough sunlight and where my kids walk in the exact same pattern on a daily basis. What can you do?

Turf disease is the #1 problem for all lawns in the summer. You should seriously consider doing the fungicides (with a free micro-nutrient mix on each visit) over the summer months if warm-season turf decline has been a problem in the past. **However, don't forget that the best way to control fungus in the first place is to mow and water correctly. If you're not sure what "correctly" means, we should talk. Only half of having a nice lawn is what we do. The other half is directly related to your grass getting the water it needs when it needs it and being mowed at 3" minimum, at least every week and with a *very sharp blade. Need we say mow?***

## **2. Optional applications / services**

***The following is very detailed information describing our newest optional treatments:***

***Mycorrhizae:*** Only available in spring or fall in conjunction with core aeration. It is something we had wanted to offer for a long time but up until now it was not cost effective enough to do so. However, there is finally a company making a new, cost-effective mycorrhizae product that makes it more reasonable to offer. It was by far the most popular optional treatment we offered last year. Not knowing how many of our clients would fully understand the game changing benefits of it, we began the season ordering only a modest 4 pallets of product. That was a mistake because, in the spring alone, we ultimately ended up needing just shy of a full 18 wheeler truckload of mycorrhizae. Based on this demand, we went ahead and early ordered another truckload for the fall aeration season and actually needed to bring in a few more pallets in order to finish out the last 2 weeks of October. **The word “mycorrhizae” literally means “fungus-roots” and it is estimated that when it attaches to a plant’s roots, that it increases the surface absorbing area up to a shocking 1,000 times. Literally, several miles of fungal filaments can be present in only a thimbleful of soil. Mycorrhizae is not a fertilizer but actually a fungus that can best be described as steroids for plants.** Plants and mycorrhizal fungi operate as a single working unit in nature. Mycorrhizae exists naturally in our soils but at lower rates than are optimal. One of the main benefits is highly increased drought tolerance, and conversely not having enough of the fungi present on the roots is often the cause of disease and insect problems. Soil is greatly improved by the fungi sending millions of tiny root-threads far out from the plants roots, allowing the plant to absorb many times more nutrients and water than it would otherwise. Unlike fertilizer than can be applied on the top of the grass and can leach into soil, mycorrhizae cannot. It will not move vertically through the soil, so it must get down beneath the surface and make direct contact with the roots. This is why you must core aerate heavily and then put down the mycorrhizae. For this reason, it must be done in conjunction with the spring aeration. If you plan to have us core aerate this spring, you should very seriously consider adding the optional mycorrhizae treatment as well. I encourage you to goggle it and check out the images of the roots of plants inoculated with mycorrhizae. You’ll see why I am so excited that we can finally offer this treatment to you. When it comes to turf strength, drought resistance, and disease resistance because of the dramatic enhancement of your lawn’s root structure, mycorrhizae is a game changer.

***Curative grub control:*** This treatment is applied in August. When treating for grubs, the goal is to control them preventatively before they are present. In the same way that we treat for crabgrass by killing the seeds with a pre-emergent before the seeds can germinate, we kill the eggs of grubs before they can hatch. However, in the same way that weather can affect the longevity of the crabgrass pre-emergent product and a secondary follow-up crabgrass application is often needed, hot temperatures can also break-down the grub control product early, as it did in some cases the past two summers. If it is in the budget, it is wise insurance to purchase indeed. If it is not, then please remember to call us right away in late summer - fall if grubs become a problem, so we can treat for them ASAP at that time. When grubs present themselves late in the season, the damage occurs very quickly and has the potential to be severe.

***Nimblewill control:*** Although it does look different than tall fescue, nimblewill is a type of grass. It is considered an undesirable plant because it is an unattractive grass that invades our tall fescue lawns. It shares a number of the same characteristics as many other warm season grasses and is basically a cousin of both Bermuda grass and zoysia grass, and it steadily spreads out over time. Because it is a native type of grass, the majority of lawns have at least a little bit present. If you’re not sure if you have nimblewill, then I would advise you not to concern yourself with getting rid of it. It is a grass, not a weed, and is only a problem if you notice it and don’t like it. On the other hand, as many of you know, undesirable grasses can be very frustrating because many are nearly impossible to eliminate no matter what you do. Unfortunately, there is still not an effective way to selectively treat and control Bermuda grass, but now there is a product that does do a good job of killing most nimblewill varieties in our lawns. Two treatments are required to control the majority of it. The nimblewill and surrounding tall fescue will turn an odd looking white color after treatment. This discoloration will disappear in

time as long as adequate water is supplied in the absence of rainfall. The cost of each treatment is 2x the amount of your standard lawn application rate.

***Stiltgrass control:*** Stiltgrass is a NON-native weed that has become a real problem over the last decade. It grows best in shaded areas and usually creeps out of wooded areas into our lawns. It looks very much like a miniature version of bamboo and is very invasive. Over time, it will become the dominant plant in a lawn if left untreated. Two treatments are required to control the majority of the stiltgrass and the cost of each treatment is 2x the amount of your standard lawn application rate.

## **The following is a comprehensive list of our optional treatments:**

### **Fungicide treatments (Preventative treatments performed late May – early September)**

Turf disease is a common but extremely complicated issue. Most of you who have been with us for a while now know the benefits of summer fungicides. You also know that because fungicide applications have a relatively short residual, that multiple applications will be needed during the hot and humid months. There is way too much information to include here. Remember that although environmental conditions do play a huge role, an additional **major** cause of turf disease is mowing too low and/or with a dull blade. Those of you who don't know what turf fungus is, are the few who must be mowing the right way all the time, watering as needed, and are also lucky enough to have a limited number of disease spores in your soil. If you have a lawn service cutting your grass, you are almost guaranteed to have disease problems during the heat of the summer because the microscopic fungus spores are transferred from one lawn to the next via lawn mowing equipment in the same way we can transfer a flu or cold to one another. So don't give your lawn service a hard time. It is not their fault. But, definitely make sure they are mowing at 3 inches, with a very sharp blade, and once per week. If they are not doing that, it is their fault.

**If you have a mowing service cutting your grass, remember that your lawn is being “infected” by your neighbors’ fungus every time the lawn mower comes in contact with your grass blades. The same way you and I will transfer a cold or flu to one another by contact, fungus spores are transferred from one infected lawn to another by lawn mowing equipment. This, in addition to the fact that your lawn will often/sometimes be mowed by a blade not as sharp as would be ideal, and because the lawn will often grow too tall between mowings because of rain delays or other factors, those of you with a mowing service will definitely require the more intensive, 5 month fungicide treatment plan.**

One thing for sure is that the more treatments that are done **preventatively (not curatively)**, the better. Just like getting a flu shot or other vaccination, the protection needs to be in place prior to exposure to the disease. Fungicide treatments are a big investment, but the last thing you want to do is to have to heavily re-seed and apply multiple bales of peat moss topdressing in the fall if your grass dies. And don't forget to factor in the fact that new grass seedlings will take about 2-3 full seasons to fully mature and be better able to withstand the stress of summer. So, if moderate or severe damage does occur in any given summer, the next few years will almost certainly require an intensive fungicide regime while the grass is still in its weaker state of “infancy.” Just like an infant or young child needs a few years of vaccinations, so too does turf grass after it dies out and is re-seeded.

### **Summer Insecticide (This is very effective and the 2nd most popular optional treatment we provide)**

This application controls ticks, fleas, spiders, ants, sod-webworms, chinch bugs, turfgrass weevils, bluegrass billbugs, cutworms, clover mites, and reduces other nuisance pests such as mosquitoes. This application will reduce the mosquito population in your yard but cannot entirely eliminate them because these insects can fly onto your property from other locations. Not only will this application eliminate lawn pests, but it will help to keep the ants & spiders out of your home and keep the ticks and fleas off of your children and pets. Insecticides (just like fungicides) cost a lot more than weed control products or fertilizer, and certain customers may require

a more intensive program while others may not. It is for these two reasons that we offer the insecticide to you on an optional/as needed basis. This way we are not putting unnecessary chemicals onto your yard and you are not spending money each year on applications you may not want. Because this application has about a 1 month residual, it will be applied from spring – summer. For some of you, this one treatment is enough to get you through the height of the summer. However, those of you with historically high insect populations may need a second treatment in mid - late summer if pests appear again.

*At a cost of only 2 1/2 times your regular application rate, this is quite a bargain compared to what a termite or pest control company will charge for this same treatment.*

### **Split apps. for increased crabgrass control**

The pre-emergent crabgrass application we put down in early spring will provide control for a period of 3-5 months. If the weather is extreme, it will only last for about three months. If summer temperatures are mild & precipitation is average, then it could last for the whole summer. It should be put down from March – April so that it can be effective when the crabgrass starts to grow in May. Crabgrass is a warm season plant that germinates throughout the entire summer. Last summer, we had some crabgrass breakthrough late in the season in some lawns. If you had a problem with this last summer, the only way to guarantee that the chemical is still active in the soil by the end of the summer in 2019 is to do a second pre-emergent treatment (split app) 4-6 weeks after the first is done. If you don't recall having any crabgrass breakthrough last summer or if you have a relatively shady lawn, you likely won't need this treatment. If you were one of the people who had some crabgrass last August or if you have a relatively sunny lawn, you should definitely consider this treatment. The cost of this treatment is the same as your regular application rate.

### **Multiple weed control treatments for wild violet, thistle, and creeping ground ivy**

Wild violet and creeping ground ivy are the two hardest weeds to control in our lawns. This is because they have a bulbous root system (similar to that of daffodils and tulips) which makes the root very hard to kill. The other reason is because the surface of their leaves are very waxy and tend to repel the herbicides that are applied in the same manner in which a waxed car will repel raindrops, by causing them to bead and roll off the car. Multiple treatments within a short period of time are needed to totally kill off these weeds. The cost for this service is three times your regular application rate. *If you know you have violet or ground ivy in your lawn, you should sign up for these applications. Many of our newer clients have these weeds.* Once you have correctly treated it for 1 year, it is usually gone and chances of needing to treat for it again for a few years are minimal. The treatments to eradicate them are very effective. Wild violet has a dark green, smooth, & somewhat shiny heart-shaped leaf. The leaves range from 1-2 inches in diameter and the plant will produce purple or white flowers at certain times of the year. Ground ivy has round, 1 inch leaves with scalloped edges. It is light green in color and grows with aggressive rhizomes.

### **Spring core aeration with no seed (greatly optimizes crabgrass pre-emergent results and the only time to also have the mycorrhizae steroids applied)**

One important advantage of this service is that we will do both the spring fertilizer and the crabgrass pre-emergent control immediately following the coring so that both products can penetrate the surface and be deposited directly into the holes to get down deeper into the soil. This will make both treatments much more effective. You have the option of pre-paying for this or you can be invoiced after it is done. Spring core aeration without seeding is 35% cheaper than doing fall aeration and seeding.

### **Mycorrhizae inoculation of your turf roots (steroids for your grass)**

Because this is a new treatment that we just began to offer last year, the description and details about it are on the first page of this packet. *However, simply said, mycorrhizae is just like steroids for plants.* And remember, because it needs to get down beneath the surface and make direct contact with the grass roots, it can only be done in conjunction with the spring core aeration.

### **Curative late summer grub control**

Like the new mycorrhizae treatment mentioned above, this treatment is a new service we began offering this year and you can review the details about it on the first page of this packet.

### **Nimblewill Control**

New treatment kills/suppresses nimblewill grass. 2 treatments are needed. Please call to discuss details.

### **Stiltgrass Control**

New treatment kills/suppresses stiltgrass. 2 treatments are needed. Please call to discuss details.

## **3. A list of very good service companies from different fields**

*The following is a random list of companies that I have personally found to be reputable, honest, and offer a fair price for their services. The list is based solely on quality and familiarity. I promise you that I do not receive any personal compensation in any form from anyone on the list. It is for your benefit only. Please feel free to tell them that I referred you to them if you wish.*

- \*Stump Grinding = Larry Kenney 301-774-4839
- \*Flooring, cabinets, and bathrooms = Rob Pawliske Floor Installation 443-286-0785
- \*Tree work/Arborist = Bartlett Tree Experts 301-881-8550
- \*Mechanic = Pitstop Automotive (Kevin Layman) 410-923-1191
- \*Tires = Radial Tire Company (Sam & Eric) 301-585-2740
- \*Plumber = Bob Sumner 301-370-1903
- \*Electrician = Fred Daves (RRF Solutions, LLC) 443-878-2910
- \*Barber = Bill Jones 301-384-3180
- \*General Contractor/Roofer = Terry Conrad 301-440-6422
- \*Guitar lessons = Jeff DeBonis 443-745-6898 (Yes, he is my brother, but he really is awesome)
- \*Optician = Olney Opticians (Butch & Kim) 301-774-2434
- \*Event videography = Frank McGuire 202-380-7533

## **4. Pre-payment and Enchilada savings of 5%-15%**

To save both of us time and money, we offer you the option of paying for lawn service in advance for the season. This way you will write only one check and don't have to think about being billed for another full year. Because this will save us time (which we all know is money) by mailing fewer invoices, we will pass this savings on to you. You can save 5% on your annual bill and write fewer checks by pre-paying for 2019 service. If you pre-pay and choose the **Enchilada**, you will receive another 5% which will give you a total savings of 10%. If you want it all and go with the **Enchilada Plus**, you can even deduct another 5% off of your total which will save you a huge 15% on all of the services.

### ***Now that's the Whole Enchilada!!!***

*Although it is encouraged, it is certainly not mandatory that balances be paid in advance for this season. We are asking those of you who have used our service in the past and know us and trust the quality of our work to pay in advance if you feel inclined to do so. If those of you who are new customers do not feel comfortable pre-paying at this time, we will prove to you this year the exceptional quality of our work so that you will have no reservations in the future if you would like to take advantage of the savings.*

***This statement is our written guarantee to you that if you have paid in advance and wish to cancel for any reason during the 2019 season, we will refund you for ALL remaining pre-paid services.***

**So what do you have to lose?**

*Thanks a lot for your time,*

Rob DeBonis

Owner, Chesapeake Lawn Science, Inc.

**Payment Terms and Conditions:**

Payments are due upon receipt of invoice. Under Maryland Law, balances that are 30 days delinquent will be charged a late payment fee of the greater of \$5.00 or 10% of charges past due. Collection and/or attorney fees will be your responsibility if legal action is required to collect any unpaid balance. If you elect not to pre-pay for service in 2018, we will invoice you monthly starting January 1<sup>st</sup> and ending with your November bill.

**[www.chesapeakelawnscience.com](http://www.chesapeakelawnscience.com) / 301-625-3232**

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**(Please Read All of This Page)**

*We will start applying limestone to your lawn in December, which is the next treatment on our standard lawn nutrition program. If you are moving or do not need us to service your lawn for any other reason, please call ASAP to alert us to this before this treatment is done. As with any treatment, if we perform it for you and then you decide to cancel, you will need to pay for it.*

**On our website, you will find information about the pre-payment option for 2019 and your 5% discount for pre-paying. Starting this year, we are offering you 15% off if you sign up and pre-pay for ALL of our optional apps. and our standard program.**

In order to save paper and because many of you would rather read the info on your computer, please go to our website at [www.chesapeakelawnsience.com](http://www.chesapeakelawnsience.com) to view the annual packet of information about your grass treatments. If you would prefer a paper copy, simply call 301-625-3232 to let us know and we will send one right out to you.

**Save your lawn this summer. Control turf disease  
w/ PREVENTATIVE fungicides.**

**We DO NOT have any more firewood available. Sorry, but we're sold out.**

Please take some time to read our annual letter online (or request a printed copy). Although lengthy, I think you'll agree that it is all very important. We look forward to working for you this upcoming year and your business is much appreciated. Contact us if you have any questions about which services your lawn can benefit from. If you have not done so already, be sure to cut your lawn short one final time at 2"-2 1/2" before winter.

**[www.chesapeakelawnsience.com](http://www.chesapeakelawnsience.com) / 301-625-3232**