



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/fall-lawn-care>

Note to editors: A video to accompany this story is available at https://youtu.be/BXbKil7Rry0?si=eA1US_9nUpohF69x

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Fall mowing will set lawn up for winter success, says K-State expert

Domenghini shares recommendations for mowing height

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Just in case homeowners are tempted to put the lawnmower away early this fall, Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini suggests that they resist that urge.

“Some people believe taller grass in the winter provides insulation for the plant crowns, protecting them through freezing temperatures,” Domenghini said. “This practice can cause problems when the grass blades fall over, which can create a matted environment perfect for winter diseases.”

Instead, Domenghini says homeowners should take steps to prepare turf for winter.

“This requires action year-round, including fertilizing, watering and mowing,” she said. “Follow recommendations for the variety of turf you are growing, but in general, you should maintain the proper height throughout the year.

For common home lawns in Kansas, the recommended heights are:

- Tall fescue – 2 ½ to 3 ½ inches.
- Kentucky bluegrass – 2 to 3 inches.
- Buffalograss – 2 to 3 inches.
- Bermudagrass – 1 to 2 inches.
- Zoysiagrass – 1 to 2 inches.

“It may be beneficial to adjust mowing height within these recommendations at specific times,” Domenghini said. “For example, warm-season grasses may be mowed taller during late summer and early fall so they can store more carbohydrates for the winter. It may also help to

reduce the incidence of cool-weather diseases. But the taller height must still be within the recommendation.”

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to hortsupport@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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Sidebar: Question of the Week

What should I do with the tomatoes that remain on my plants but aren’t ripening?

Remaining tomatoes can be left on the vine to ripen as long as there isn’t a frost in the forecast, but ripening is slow this time of year. Green tomatoes that are full-sized can be harvested and placed in a paper bag to continue ripening indoors.

You may notice a white, star-shape on the bottom of mature green tomatoes. Green tomatoes that aren’t mature will not continue to ripen, but can be used for a variety of recipes.

Tomatoes with blemishes or cracks in the skin should be discarded to avoid contaminating others. Store ripe tomatoes on cardboard trays with newspaper between layers if stacked. If possible, keep the temperature close to 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Check periodically for rotting and remove tomatoes as needed.

Cynthia Domenghini, K-State horticulture expert, Cdom@ksu.edu

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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Story by

Pat Melgares
melgares@ksu.edu

For more information:

Cynthia Domenghini
Cdom@ksu.edu