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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

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Aerification—A Very Important Component of Lawn Management!

Do you have areas in your lawn that receives a tremendous amount of traffic? Have you ever noticed the turfgrass declining in this area? Your lawn may be suffering from soil compaction.

When soils become compacted, several things occur. First, oxygen within the soil profile becomes depleted. Oxygen is very important in maintaining a healthy root system. Second, the rate at which water moves into the soil and through the soil profile is hindered. This is referred to as the infiltration and percolation rates in soil. To overcome this problem, you may want to core aerify your lawn. Core aerification not only works well to break through the compaction, but will also assist in thatch management and with soil layering issues. The best time to perform this task for all warm season turfgrasses is during the active growing season—preferably in the spring. Some of the equipment rental businesses have core aerification machines. Make sure you have a moderate amount of moisture and watch out for tree roots and irrigation pipes. Your lawn will definitely appreciate this cultivation practice!

Oak Leaf Blister

This spring we have been receiving calls concerning oak trees with yellow, blister like circular raised areas. The disease is Oak Leaf Blister. It is a common disease affecting many species of oaks, especially the red oaks. White oaks are rarely infected. Disease development is favored by cool, wet springs and in years when these conditions occur, noticeable leaf deformity results. Heavy infections of red oaks impair their appearance but do not endanger the health of the tree

Symptoms appear in late spring or early summer as yellow, blister like, circular, raised areas, 1/16 to ½ inch in diameter. The blisters are scattered over the upper leaf surface with corresponding gray depressions on the lower surface. They turn from yellow to reddish brown with pale yellow margins, then become dull brown with age. Several blisters may merge and cause the leaves to curl.

This disease does not pose a threat to tree health but can mar the tree's appearance. In special cases where it is highly desirable to prevent the unsightly infections, a single application of a fungicide in early spring just before the buds begin to swell will effectively manage this disease. Fungicides will not be effective if applied after bud break.

Homeowners are strongly discouraged from trying to treat large landscape trees. If treatment is required, consider hiring a professional applicator.

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