

BLUE HORIZON LANDSCAPES LLC

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Free Homeowner's Guide · 12-Month Calendar · DIY Tips · Pest Reference

A Homeowner's Month-by-Month Guide · USDA Zone 6a

Orange County Lawn Care Calendar

The Complete

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The Complete Orange County Lawn Care Calendar

A Homeowner's Month-by-Month Guide · USDA Hardiness Zone 6a

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The Complete Orange County Lawn Care Calendar

A Homeowner's Month-by-Month Guide for Orange County, NY & the Hudson Valley

Prepared by Blue Horizon Landscapes LLC

(914) 755-8141 · contact@bluehorizonlandscapes.com · bluehorizonlandscapes.com

How to use this calendar

Orange County sits in USDA Hardiness Zone 6a. Winters drop well below zero, humid summers climb into the upper eighties, and shoulder seasons are when the lawn does its real growing. A calendar written for Long Island, the Carolinas, or Ohio will not work here — the windows are tighter, the grass types are different, and New York State regulates what you can put on the lawn and when. This guide covers twelve months in order, sized for a homeowner with a quarter-acre to one-acre lot.

A few ground rules before January:

- **Read the calendar once before you act.** Aeration has to come before overseeding. The late-fall fertilizer has to land after top growth stops but before the ground freezes. Doing the right thing in the wrong month can hurt more than help.
- **Adjust for your microclimate.** Newburgh runs warmer than Warwick or Goshen. A south-facing slope in Middletown behaves like a different climate than a shaded yard a block away. Use the dates as a baseline, then shift a week earlier or later based on what you see.
- **Watch the lawn, not the date.** The right time to mow is when the grass is growing, not when the calendar says it is spring.

The grass you are growing

Most Orange County lawns are a blend of three cool-season grasses, and the calendar below is built around how each one behaves.

Kentucky bluegrass is the backbone of most lawns here. It spreads by rhizomes, fills in bare spots on its own, and produces the dense, dark-green turf most homeowners picture. It loves the fall — September through early November is its main root-growth window.

Perennial ryegrass germinates fast and wears well, which is why almost every bag of seed at the Orange County farm stores has it mixed in. It does not spread, so it does not repair itself, but it germinates in five to seven days, making it the workhorse of overseeding.

Fine fescues — hard, chewings, and creeping red — are the shade specialists. Under oak trees or on the north side of the house, fine fescue outperforms bluegrass. It tolerates poor soil and dry shade and uses less water.

A typical Orange County lawn is 60 to 80 percent Kentucky bluegrass, 10 to 20 percent perennial ryegrass, and a smaller slice of fine fescue in the shaded areas. The calendar assumes that blend.

Two rules that override everything else

Mowing height. Set the deck at 3.0 to 3.5 inches in spring and fall. Raise it to 3.5 to 4.0 inches from mid-June through August. Taller grass shades the soil, keeps the crown cooler, and forces roots deeper. Never remove more than one-third of the leaf blade in a single cut.

Watering. Target one to one and a half inches per week, including rainfall, delivered in one or two deep soakings rather than daily sprinkles. Water in the morning, before 10 a.m. — evening watering feeds the fungal diseases that show up in July and August.

January

January is mostly a planning month. The ground is frozen or close to it, the lawn is dormant, and almost anything you do physically right now will do more harm than good.

- **Sharpen the mower blade.** A dull blade tears grass, and a torn leaf tip turns brown and invites disease. Replace the blade if it is bent or gouged.
- **Service the mower.** Change the oil, replace the air filter and spark plug, clean the under-deck, add fuel stabilizer.
- **Plan the season.** Walk the lawn with a notebook. Mark bare spots, low spots, the edges the snow plow chews up, and the paths the dog has worn.
- **Order seed and supplies early.** Good blends sell out by mid-March. Order now, store cool and dry.
- **Stay off frozen turf.** Frozen grass blades snap underfoot and do not recover until spring.

February

The tail of winter. Days lengthen, snow melts, and the temptation to get out is strong. The lawn is still dormant and the soil is still saturated or frozen.

- **Rake only what is loose.** Get leaves or debris that blew onto the lawn before the last snow, while the ground is firm. Do not work wet soil.
- **Check for vole damage.** Voles tunnel under snow and chew grass crowns, leaving winding dead trails. Most recover on their own — mark the worst spots for fall overseeding.
- **Stay off soft ground.** If footprints sink more than a quarter inch, the soil is too wet. Compaction now lasts years.
- **Pre-book spring services.** Lawn care companies fill up in February. Lock in fertilization, aeration, or spring cleanup now for April–May delivery.
- **Inspect tools.** Sharpen pruners, oil the trimmer, check spreader calibration.

March

The lawn wakes up. Soil temperatures climb into the forties, the grass greens up, and the weeds get going before the grass does. Do not fertilize yet — New York State restricts nitrogen application between December 1 and April 1.

- **First mow, low and clean.** Set the deck at 2.5 inches for this single cut. Bag clippings. Raise the deck back to 3.0 inches after.
- **Spot-treat broadleaf weeds.** Dandelions, chickweed, and henbit are visible. Targeted post-emergent on a calm day above 50°F works well.
- **Rake out matted areas.** Snow mold and old thatch can mat down over winter. A flexible leaf rake lifted lightly across the surface pulls up the worst without tearing the crown.
- **Edge the beds.** A clean edge between lawn and beds stops grass creeping into plantings.

April

The first real growing month. Soil reaches the mid-fifties, the grass is actively growing, and the spring fertilization window opens (April 15 through June 1).

- **First spring fertilizer.** Slow-release nitrogen at 0.75 to 1.0 pound of actual N per 1,000 sq ft. A 20-0-10 with 30 to 50 percent slow-release N is ideal. Do not exceed one pound per 1,000 in a single application.
- **Pre-emergent crabgrass control.** If you had crabgrass last year, apply when soil holds at 55°F, usually mid to late April. Skip this if you plan to overseed in fall — it blocks grass seed too.
- **Begin regular mowing.** Deck at 3.0 to 3.5 inches. Never remove more than one-third of the blade at a time.
- **Aerate compacted areas if spring is your only window.** Late August through mid-October is better, but mid to late April works if needed.

May

Peak spring growth. The grass is thick, the mowing is weekly, and the lawn looks better than it will all year.

- **Maintain mowing at 3.0 to 3.5 inches.** Sharp blade. Leave clippings on the lawn — they return nitrogen.
- **Second spring fertilizer if needed.** A light 0.5 to 0.75 pound of N per 1,000 sq ft in mid to late May extends green color.
- **Spot-spray remaining broadleaf weeds.** Catch them before they go to seed.
- **Topdress low spots.** A thin layer of screened compost, no more than half an inch.
- **Begin monitoring chinch bugs on south-facing slopes.** Hot, dry, full-sun areas are first to show damage.

When to call Blue Horizon. If your lawn has thin or bare patches, May is the right month to plan a fall renovation — aeration and overseeding happen in September, and the prep work starts now. See our full

[lawn care services](#) page or call (914) 755-8141.

June

The transition month. Heat builds, and by month's end summer stress starts to show.

- **Stop fertilizing by mid-month.** Late-June nitrogen feeds weeds and fungal disease more than grass.
- **Raise the mowing height to 3.5 inches.** Taller grass in summer shades the soil and forces roots deeper.
- **Water deeply and infrequently.** One deep soaking per week of one to one and a half inches. Morning only.
- **Watch for early brown patch.** Circular patches two to three feet across with a smoky ring at the edge. Cultural controls beat fungicides at this stage.

When to call Blue Horizon. Hardscaping and landscape design projects book out four to eight weeks across the Hudson Valley. If you want a patio, retaining wall, or full landscape renovation done before snow, June is the right month to lock in the schedule. Call (914) 755-8141.

July

The hardest month on a cool-season lawn. Heat, humidity, and dry weather arrive at once.

- **Mow at 3.5 to 4.0 inches.** Non-negotiable in July. Single biggest thing you can do.
- **Water one to one and a half inches per week.** Morning only, before 10 a.m. Never in the evening.
- **Do not fertilize.** Nitrogen in July feeds brown patch, dollar spot, and Pythium. Wait until September.
- **Apply preventive grub control if grubs have been a problem.** Window is July through early August. Skip if no damage last year — it is not cheap and should not be routine.
- **Watch for chinch bugs.** South-facing slopes and edges along pavement show damage first. Confirm with a float test (cut both ends out of a coffee can, press into turf, fill with water, count bugs that float up in ten minutes).

August

The bridge month. The worst of the heat is past by the third or fourth week, and fall renovation starts.

- **Keep mowing at 3.5 to 4.0 inches.** Do not drop the deck until mid-September.
- **Continue watering one to one and a half inches per week.** Late August heat waves still cook cool-season turf.
- **Watch for brown patch in evening humidity.** Hot days, warm nights above 68°F, wet leaf surfaces — cultural controls beat fungicides in home lawns.
- **Book the fall aeration and overseeding now.** Window opens Labor Day, closes mid-October. Companies book out two to three weeks.
- **Apply curative grub treatment if you see damage.** Dead patches that peel back like carpet from late August through October.

September

The most important month of the year for a cool-season lawn in Orange County. Heat breaks, rain returns, the grass shifts into primary root-growth. Everything you do this month pays off for the next twelve months.

- **Aerate.** Core aeration — hollow tines pulling actual plugs — is the single best cultural practice. Late August through mid-October. Water the day before so tines penetrate cleanly.
- **Overseed immediately after aeration.** Spread a blend of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass at two to three pounds per 1,000 sq ft. Include fine fescue in shaded areas. Topdress with a thin layer of compost if available.
- **Keep the seedbed moist.** Light water once or twice daily for two to three weeks until germination. Ryegrass comes up in 5–7 days; bluegrass takes 14–21.
- **Apply the early-fall fertilizer.** One pound of actual N per 1,000 sq ft around Labor Day. A 24-0-12 fall formulation with slow-release N is ideal.
- **Spot-treat broadleaf weeds.** Fall window beats spring — weeds pull herbicide down to roots.

October

Cleanup month and the start of the late-fall feeding window.

- **Apply the late-fall fertilizer.** The single most important fertilization of the year for cool-season turf in Zone 6a. One to one and a half pounds of actual N per 1,000 sq ft between mid-October and mid-November, after top growth stops but while roots are still active.
- **Finish overseeding.** Window closes around mid-October.
- **Begin leaf cleanup.** A thick layer left over winter smothers grass and invites snow mold. Mulching leaves with the mower is acceptable if the layer is light.
- **Lower the mowing height gradually.** Drop the deck to 2.5 to 3.0 inches for the last cut of the year.
- **Drain and shut down irrigation.** Blow out lines. cap the backflow preventer. store timers indoors.

When to call Blue Horizon. If leaves are stacking up faster than you can keep up with, October is the last easy month to get it done before snow. We run leaf cleanup crews across Orange County and the Hudson Valley from mid-October until the first hard snow. Call **(914) 755-8141**.

November

The bridge between lawn season and snow season.

- **Finish leaf cleanup.** A second pass in early to mid-November catches the late drop. Heavy leaf piles left all winter kill the grass underneath.
- **Apply the final late-fall fertilizer if you missed October.** November 15 is the practical cutoff.
- **Mow one last time at 2.5 inches.** Short grass going into winter is less prone to snow mold and voles.
- **Winterize equipment.** Drain fuel or add stabilizer. Disconnect battery on riding mowers. Clean the underside of the deck.

- **Mark irrigation lines and property edges.** Flag sprinkler heads so the snow plow and spring edging do not chew them up.

When to call Blue Horizon. Snow removal contracts for the coming winter should be in place before the first storm. Seasonal and per-push plowing for residential driveways and small commercial lots across Orange County. Call (914) 755-8141 to get on the route list.

December

The quiet month. The lawn is dormant, the equipment is put away, and there is almost nothing to do outside.

- **Stay off frozen turf.** Frozen grass blades snap underfoot. Park on the street if the driveway is narrow.
- **Watch for snow mold.** Pink and gray snow mold both show up under snow if there was a thick layer of leaves or unmowed grass going into winter. Wait until the snow melts, then rake matted areas in March.
- **Use ice melt carefully.** Standard rock salt damages concrete, kills grass along walkways, and is hard on pets' paws. Calcium magnesium acetate near the lawn and dog run.
- **Plan next year's projects.** Patios, retaining walls, full landscape renovations — December is the right month to start the conversation.
- **Do not apply nitrogen.** NY State restricts application December 1 through April 1.

Common problems and what to do about them

Grubs. White grubs are beetle larvae. They feed on roots in late summer and early fall. Damage shows up as irregular brown patches that lift up like loose carpet. Preventive in July–early August; curative late August through mid-October. A healthy lawn tolerates six to eight grubs per square foot — treatment is justified above that.

Chinch bugs. Attack the hottest, driest, sunniest parts of the lawn — south-facing slopes, edges along driveways and sidewalks. Damage looks like drought stress that does not respond to watering. Confirm with a float test.

Brown patch. Caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia*. Shows up in July and August when heat combines with warm nights above 68°F and wet leaf surfaces. Circular patches with a dark, smoky ring at the edge. The fix is cultural: mow tall, water in the morning, improve airflow, reduce nitrogen.

Snow mold. Pink (*Microdochium*) and gray (*Typhula*) species show up under snow in late winter. Circular patches of matted, pinkish or grayish grass. Short, clean grass going into winter is the best prevention. Rake matted areas in March.

Crabgrass. A summer annual that germinates in late spring and dies with the first frost. Plants you see in August produced thousands of seeds for next year. Pre-emergent in mid to late April stops germination — but do not apply in the same season as overseeding.

Five DIY tips that solve 80% of lawn problems

Most lawn problems in Orange County are solved by the basics. If you do nothing else, do these:

1. **Mow at 3.5 inches from June through August.** The single biggest thing a homeowner controls. Taller grass shades the soil, keeps the crown cool, and forces roots deep enough to survive heat.
2. **Water in the morning, deeply and infrequently.** One to one and a half inches per week, delivered in one or two morning soakings, beats daily sprinkles every time. Evening watering feeds July's fungal disease.
3. **Aerate and overseed every September.** Core aeration plus a fresh blend of bluegrass and ryegrass is the cheapest single improvement you can make. The grass is genetically programmed to grow in fall.
4. **Fertilize in late fall, not spring.** The single most important fertilization of the year is the late-October to mid-November application. Spring feeds top growth the lawn cannot sustain; fall feeds the roots.
5. **Get a \$20 soil test before you spend on products.** Cornell Cooperative Extension or any garden center will run it. A soil test tells you whether the lawn needs lime, potassium, or just nitrogen — and saves you from buying the wrong thing.

For the other 20 percent — soil pH, compaction, drainage, persistent pest problems — a professional walk-through pays for itself in the first season.

When to call Blue Horizon

This calendar covers what a motivated homeowner can do on their own. There are four jobs that consistently make more sense to hand off to a professional crew, especially on a quarter-acre or larger lot:

- **Full-season lawn care program.** Weekly mowing, fertilization, weed control, and seasonal cleanups. Frees you from the calendar entirely.
- **Fall renovation.** Core aeration, overseeding, topdressing, and the September fertilization window. Crews that do this every day get germination rates homeowners cannot match.
- **Leaf cleanup and end-of-season shutdown.** Two or three visits between mid-October and Thanksgiving, plus irrigation blowout.
- **Lawn renovation when DIY has not worked.** Soil sampling, written plan, and a multi-season approach for lawns that have struggled for more than one year.

Blue Horizon Landscapes LLC has been maintaining lawns across Orange County and the Hudson Valley since 2020. We are a full-service landscaping company — lawn maintenance, hardscaping and masonry, mulching and property cleanup, planting and garden design, tree and shrub care, and plowing and snow removal. We are licensed and insured, hold a 5-star average across our Google reviews, and stand behind every job with a written scope and a real callback number. Free estimates, no pressure, same-day callbacks during business hours.

For lawns, hardscaping, and seasonal work across Newburgh, Middletown, Warwick, Goshen, Chester, Fishkill, Poughkeepsie, Harriman, Montgomery, and the rest of Orange County, the number is the same: **(914) 755-8141**. Or send a note to contact@bluehorizonlandscapes.com. We will get back to you the

same business day.

Get in touch: bluehorizonlandscapes.com/services · bluehorizonlandscapes.com/contact

The Complete Orange County Lawn Care Calendar is published by Blue Horizon Landscapes LLC. It is intended as a general guide for homeowners in USDA Hardiness Zone 6a. For decisions involving pesticide application, significant renovation, or diagnosis of persistent lawn problems, consult a certified lawn care professional or the Orange County Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Need help? We're one call away.

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Harriman, Montgomery, and the rest of Orange County, NY.**