



# the Hedgelines

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May 2023

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## Getting to the Root of the Problem

High-quality lawns and landscapes can be achieved with practices that build soil health through fertilization and cultural practices, such as soil aeration, mowing height, and timing and volume of water. Diseases and pest problems can often be preventable in a healthy, fertile lawn.

*Soil compaction is a serious consequence of urban development activities.*

It is the basis for poor landscape health and soil infiltration. Compaction can lead to problems with soil drainage, aeration, nutrient cycling, and plant growth. Soil compaction is often caused by heavy traffic (foot or equipment) in existing landscapes and new construction. Compaction can also be exacerbated when heavy equipment is used when the soil is very wet.

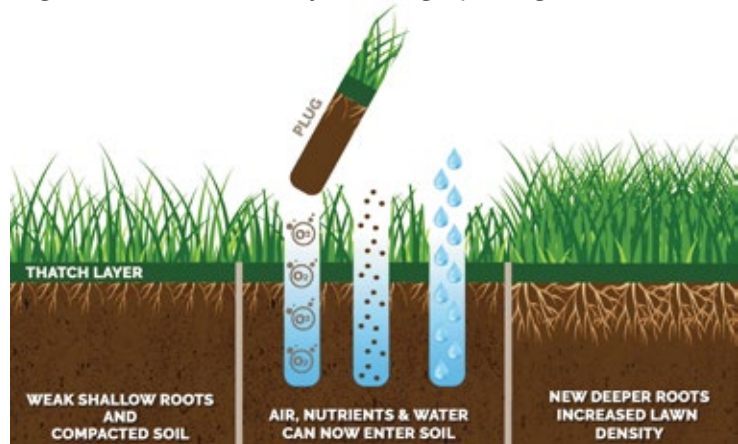
Soil compaction is quantified by calculating bulk density. What's essential to get from this is that when bulk densities are high (compacted soil) in sand-dominated soil, plant root growth beyond the planting hole is restricted or inhibited, resulting in poor plant establishment and growth. Visual indicators of compacted soil include:

- Excessive shallow and lateral root growth of plant materials.
- Ponding of water.
- Excessive water runoff during rainfall or irrigation events.

Sand-dominated soils exhibit poor nutrient-holding capacity; this is why fertilizer rates per application are so important. When fertilizing compacted soil can cause the leaching of applied nutrients below the roots. If nutrients leach below the plant root zone, they are unavailable and can enter groundwater supplies. Environmental drawbacks of stormwater runoff include erosion of slopes and other surfaces, overloading municipal wastewater treatment systems and introduction of pollutants (chemicals, oils, fertilizers) into natural bodies of water.

The University of Florida sampled residential landscape soils within Central Florida and found soil dominated by large sand particles and low soil moisture retention. Sampled soils in newly developed urban residential communities were found to be highly compacted and likely to inhibit plant establishment and growth. They concluded that compacted soil conditions should be repaired through tillage and core aeration to maximize plant establishment success.

Compacted soil encourages weeds. If your lawn is hard, compacted, and full of weeds or bare spots, aeration will help air, water, and fertilizer to enter. Warm-season turf, such as St. Augustine, Bermuda, and Zoysia grass, begin active growth during the summer, so they should be aerated in the late spring and early summer. Aeration will address soil fertility and organic matter issues by creating openings for nutrients and seeds to access the soil.



### Aeration...

- + Improves air exchange between the soil and atmosphere.
- + Enhances soil water uptake.
- + Improves fertilizer uptake and use.
- + Reduces water runoff and puddling.
- + Enhances stronger turfgrass roots.
- + Reduces soil compaction.
- + Enhances heat and drought stress tolerance.
- + Reduces thatch accumulation.



### Give a Chinch an Inch, and They'll Take your Yard

#### What are Chinch Bugs & what causes them?

Chinch bugs are small black and white insects that feed on the sap of grass thatch. While these chinch bugs suck plant juices, they inject chemicals into the plant, clogging its vascular system. The southern chinch bug is the most damaging insect pest of St. Augustinegrass.

#### General Appearance

Chinch bugs have piercing-sucking mouthparts. They spend their time in the winter protecting themselves and resurface in the spring when the weather warms up.

#### Symptoms

Often, the area of the plant that the Chinch bug feeds on will turn yellow. At first damaged areas will appear small and irregular until this pest spreads outward throughout the lawn. Then these patches will get bigger over time as they feed even more, turn reddish-brown and eventually die. Most of the time, damages will begin to appear around June.

#### Habitat

Chinch bugs prefer to feed on different types of St. Augustine grass and Bermuda, Bahia, and Zoysia grass. Chinch bugs live in the thatch area of the turfgrass and prefer to feed on the lower leaf sheath and crown area of the plant. They tend to stay together in an area and feed on the same plant simultaneously. Once they kill the turfgrass or the plant they were feeding on, they will move to another section of the lawn.



#### Treatment

During this time of year, yellow spots may start appearing in turfgrass. In just a day or two, Chinch Bug damage and yellow spotting can go from the size of a basketball to the size of a truck. LMP has developed an excellent method of eliminating and downsizing the population of Chinch bugs. If you are experiencing a Chinch bug problem in your lawn, call us, and we'll evaluate the situation.



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### Grub control.

You might not realize you have a problem until it's too late. These silent killers bring a whole slew of problems from ruined grass to other pests that enjoy dining on grubs.

Lawn grubs can cause extensive damage to your turf as they feed on the roots of the grass. While the damage goes beyond turning your grass thin, yellow, or brown, it is possible to prevent white grubs from causing damage to your turf. Preventative grub treatments can be applied to kill larvae early before grubs can cause damage.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Dormant	Excessive Eating	Egg-Laying	Excessive Eating	Light Eating							
NO DAMAGE	EXTENSIVE DAMAGE IF UNTREATED	IDEAL PREVENTION TIME	EXTENSIVE DAMAGE IF UNTREATED	LIGHT DAMAGE							

#### Key Pests Controlled

- Aphids
- Armyworms
- Asiatic garden beetles
- Azalea lace bugs
- Billbugs
- Black turfgrass ateniens
- Caterpillars
- Cutworms
- European chafers
- European crane flies
- Florida wax scales
- Glassy-winged sharpshooters
- Green June beetles
- Japanese beetles
- Leafhoppers
- Leafminers
- Mealybugs
- Mole crickets (suppression)
- Northern masked chafers
- Nuisance ants
- Oriental beetles
- Phyllophaga (June beetles)
- Pyrethroid- Chinch bugs
- Root weevils
- Scales
- Sod webworms
- Southern masked chafers
- Spittle bugs
- White grubs
- Whiteflies

# Preparing Trees for Hurricane Season

*Damage from trees is a major issue after a hurricane. Make sure they're pruned before hurricane season begins.*



Hurricane season stretches for half the year in Florida, from June through November. That's a huge and worrying window of disaster. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) Director Kevin Guthrie said, "Now is the time to make a plan and figure out what steps you need to take."

After all the damage and cleanup from Ian, we encourage all to prune your trees properly. The large amounts of fallen and damaged trees usually seen after a storm are from improper cutting or pruning of trees. Improperly pruning trees before a storm can increase the possibility that they will break or fall more easily during the storm.

Hurricane season may start in just one month, but the real danger zone for hurricanes in Florida is August to October. That's when the warm water flowing north from the Gulf of Mexico smacks into the winds blowing west from Africa, creating what meteorologists call "tropical waves."

The University of Florida Horticulture Department has provided great tips on properly preparing trees for Hurricane Season.

- ▶ Prune trees during the tree species' dormant season or during early spring.

- ▶ Never "top" or "hatrack" any tree. "Hatcracking" is used when a tree is cut or chopped so badly that it is left with few or no leaves on the branches.

- ▶ Only remove up to 25 percent of the tree canopy.

- ▶ Do not cut the tree root system.

- ▶ Remove mainly the interior branches. This will thin the tree's canopy and allow the winds to pass through it more easily.

- ▶ Trees with a thick canopy should be thinned. Avoid removing more than 25-30% of the foliage per year. Most trees do not need to be pruned each year. Thin the canopy when it becomes thick. Some interior branches should be removed to allow wind through the canopy.



- ▶ A tree with multiple leaders (trunks) will become hazardous to people and property as the tree grows larger. Never allow trees to grow with multiple upright leaders. These trees may look handsome when young but become hazardous as they age.

- ▶ Horizontal-oriented branches are better attached to trees than upright branches. Upright branches are poorly attached to trunks. Horizontally-oriented branches are usually well secured to trunks, but a branch growing upright parallel to the trunk becomes a second trunk. The tree is a double leader and are dangerous because they can easily split from the tree during a storm.

- ▶ Avoid "lion tailing" and "overlifting". "Lion tailing" refers to removing smaller branches on large branches leaving the foliage only on the ends of branches. The limbs will look like a lion's tail. "Overlifting" refers to removing lower branches of trees. These harmful practices make trees more vulnerable to wind damage and rot. The common guide is that the tree's lower half needs 2/3 of the foliage and branches.

*To Learn More about Preparing your Landscape for Hurricane Season visit:*

How to Minimize Wind Damage <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP042>

Is my Tree Safe <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP507>

# Property Spotlight: The Meridian One, Two, and Three

The Meridian One, Two, and Three are located in Tampa’s thriving Westshore District. It is the largest employment area on the West Coast of Florida and continues to revolutionize and develop. The buildings provide a serene environment flush with outdoor space. Connectivity is important to all of us, and the convenient location of the office parks on Cypress Street makes it extra special. LMP has partnered with Highwoods for over 20 years and taken much pride in the landscape maintenance of these three parks.



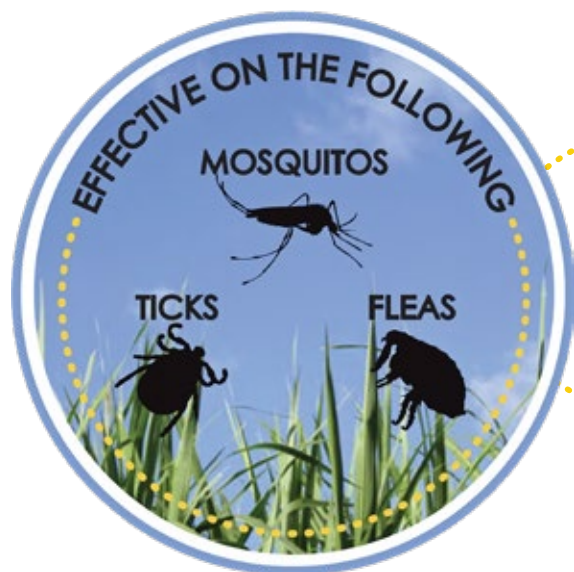
# Mosquito control.

LMP is committed to helping you protect your home, lawn and family against ticks, fleas and other disruptive pests. We eliminate breeding ground possibilities by our fast-acting and long-lasting barrier treatments. Pest control services include adulticide mosquitos, ticks and fleas before they can start breeding on your property.

## Proactive Treatment

We spray an effective barrier treatment throughout your property eliminating up to 90% of the mosquitoes from your yard. A mere 30 minutes later, it's dry and effective within 24 hours of the first application.

For 21 days post-treatment, the barrier formed by the spray will reduce the presence of mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks.



## MASK

Masking the CO<sub>2</sub> you are exhaling makes it impossible for the pests to find you!

## REPEL

Our mosquito, flea and tick control products also irritate the mosquito's senses, creating a barrier to drive them away.

## KILL

We use as little of these products as necessary depending on weather and mosquito populations.

## Public Health

In Florida, there are over 80 species of mosquitoes. Of these species, nearly a quarter are considered public health threats due to the pathogens they may transmit, including endemic viruses (i.e., West Nile virus and Eastern equine encephalitis) and exotic viruses (i.e., Zika, dengue and chikungunya). In addition, many of these mosquitoes are considered pestiferous to communities all over Florida.

## Florida Mosquito Control

Florida has over 60 state-approved mosquito control programs. In addition to playing a key role in public health, mosquito control programs support the economy by protecting Florida's tourism and livestock industry. Today, millions of people can enjoy Florida's beaches and parks thanks to the efforts of our mosquito control programs.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services provides a Mosquito Control Directory Map. The map link below provides contact information for each program (phone, address, etc.), visualizes the general location of each facility, and identifies the programs that have aerial spraying capabilities. If you are looking for information about your local program, simply select the county and details will display on the map.



## ELIMINATE. DEFEND. PROTECT.

LMP's ProActive Pest Control contains similar ingredients as those found in pet flea and tick treatments. It helps eliminate the pests in your yard that spread harmful diseases.

*To navigate the FDACS Mosquito Map, visit the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website:*  
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Mosquito-Control/Mosquito-Control-Programs>

*To learn more about mosquito-borne diseases in Florida, visit the Florida Department of Health website:*  
<https://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html>

# Fire ant control.



Unlike other ants, fire ants have no nest entry on the mound. They enter the nest via tunnels reaching several feet or more beyond the mound itself. During especially hot or dry weather, colonies tend to move deeper into the ground, foregoing the palatial mounds that are so obvious in moderate weather. New colonies may not build a visible mound for months or longer, depending on soil and weather conditions.



Their habit of attacking electrical components can cause damage to irrigation controllers, lights, A/C, and other electrical devices, creating a need for costly repairs and replacements.

Our Topchoice fire ant treatment is a granular product with Fipronil as the active ingredient. Fipronil is typically found in products used to control fleas and ticks on pets. Topchoice is a targeted treatment for fire ants, fleas, ticks, and mole crickets. Topchoice is typically applied to the entire turf and ornamental areas to create a barrier on the soil surface. Once the Topchoice granules are spread, water is required to activate the product.

Topchoice has the most prolonged residual effects of any of the applications. Studies indicate Topchoice will achieve close to 100% control 300 days after the initial treatment before effectiveness wanes. Topchoice is the most expensive in initial cash outlay but may over time be the least expensive due to the costs of subsequent applications of the other products.

Fire ants are an irritating part of life for many homeowners. Although these insects are stubborn, opportunistic, and abundant, following a consistent schedule of bait applications will minimize their threat.

## LMP Book Club: Growing Weeders into Leaders

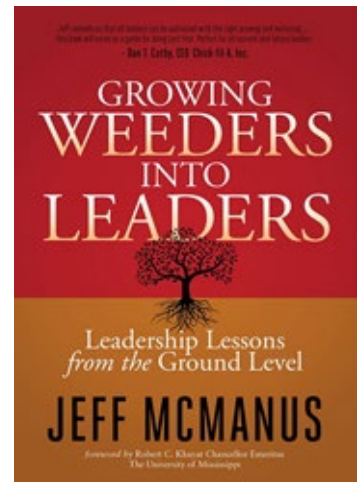
*What is a weed? An interesting question that leads to thought-provoking ideas about what plants can teach us about business and life.*

Today, greatness is often judged by the quickest or slowest times, highest heights, medals won, and accolades received. However, as Aristotle taught us, greatness is what we can accomplish every day for the satisfaction of accepting the challenge, forging a team, and beating the odds, without regard for praise or reward.

Under Jeff McManus's leadership as Director of Landscape Services, the Ole Miss campus has won professional awards—and been cited by Newsweek and Princeton Review as America's "most beautiful campus." He stated, "The price of any property is set at the front entrance...A property's appearance says a lot about the leadership and value placed on any organization." To be great little details have to matter.

In *Growing Weeders into Leaders*, he relates the principles behind his team's success. He explains the guiding ideas for his team's success in *Growing Weeders into Leaders*. It is a fascinating and profound look into the minds and daily struggles of regular individuals who discovered their inner greatness and followed their dreams, establishing one of the most beautiful colleges in America.

We are taking the same approach with our team...Great men are not born great; they grow great..."*Mario Puzo, The Godfather*. Our three branches are all diving into "Growing Weeders into Leaders." I especially loved this Jeff quote, "Plants grow healthier in the right environment and struggle in an environment that is not conducive to growth."



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