

Eagle Ridge Property Owners Association Deed of Restrictions Committee



Landscape Issues and Fixes

The Deed of Restrictions Committee tours the streets of Eagle Ridge each month to verify that all homes in our community are being maintained in keeping with the general character of the neighborhood. Many of the deficiency issues that are cited have to do with landscape maintenance.

A high percentage of the monthly citations come from two Deed of Restriction landscaping goals.

1. A Floratam or approved equal grass lawn that is **lush, green and reasonably free of weeds.**
2. A minimum of (2) 12' properly maintained trees in the front yard, plus attractive smaller "Florida Friendly" shrubs or other **plantings that are kept pruned, mulched and weed free.**
3. The homeowner is responsible for irrigating the lawn and plantings during dry periods.

Many home owners do their own landscape maintenance while others hire a service. Either way here are some useful tips provided to us by a local service¹, as well as the University of Florida and other Websites <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/lawngarden/homelawn.html>. This and other useful information may be found on our Eagle Ridge Website www.EagleRidge33912.com - click on the **Resources** tab.

First off, it is important to remember that any major changes in your landscaping must be pre-approved by the Architectural Control Committee.

The current Deed of Restrictions officially approved lawn type is the Floratam variety of St Augustine grass. This variety was selected due to its recognized suitability for SW Florida lawns. Floratam plugs and sod are available from local stores such as Home Depot and Lowes. If you have small areas of bare lawn, plugs are probably the least expensive alternative, but it takes several months until the plugs spread into the rest of your lawn. Sod, on the other hand, provides instant gratification.

Causes of lawn deficiencies are often due to weeds, insects or inadequate irrigation in the dry months.

Weeds

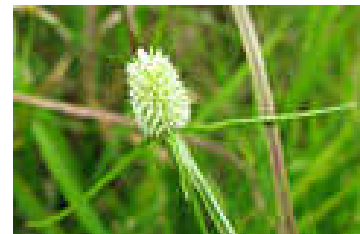
The two most common broadleaf weeds in Eagle Ridge are Dollar Weed and Spurge, which can be controlled with Image Weed Killer compatible with Floratam lawns.



Dollar weed



Spurge



Sedge

A third common weed is Sedge, which is really an undesirable grass with tiny white flowers. Sedges have stems that are triangular in shape and can take over an entire Floratam yard. It tends to grow in moist soils that do not drain well. The typical cause is from seed heads relocated by wind or intrusion from underground tubers that are difficult to eliminate. The solution requires spraying with a specific class of herbicide with repeated applications and appropriate timing. It is easiest to eradicate in the dry winter months.

¹ Land•art Naples Florida 1-800-336-LAWN

Florida Pusley



growth.

This white star shaped weed becomes very visible in the warm dry season and can quickly take over a lawn. When the grass becomes too sparse from stress of disease or drought these weeds take over bare areas by sprouting at opportune times. Keep your lawn in good shape by mowing at the proper height, irrigating when needed and fertilizing from October to May. Although small infestations of Florida pusley can be physically removed, larger infestations will likely require post-emergence herbicide treatment. For optimum control, make your herbicide application when Florida pusley is actively growing and in the seedling to flower stage of

Insects

The two most troublesome bugs found in Eagle Ridge lawns are Cinch bugs and Grubs.



St. Augustine grass lawn damaged by the southern chinch bug,



Chinch bugs feeding on St. Augustine grass in the laboratory.



Chinch bugs are found above ground on the lawn. When chinch bugs damage Floratam, the only choices are to treat with insecticides or to watch the lawn die. An insecticide called Bifen or Bifenthrin is available at Home Depot in concentrate form and will require a chemical sprayer. This same insecticide can also be used indoors for beetles, earwigs, fire ants, cockroaches and other pests.



Grubs, on the other hand, are found below ground in almost all Florida lawns. When they are deep, they don't cause much problem but, in the rainy season when the lawns become saturated, they are forced up near the roots. At that time, usually after late August they can be successfully treated with an insecticide such as Dylox. This is also available at Home Depot under the name of Grub Killer Plus. To diagnose a grub problem, peel back a square foot of turf in a brown area. If it peels easily and you see more than six grubs, you have a grub problem.



Fertilizer Restriction Law

There is a law in Lee County regulating the use of fertilizers containing Nitrogen and/or Phosphorus. They cannot be applied during the four-month rainy season, June through September. During the remainder of the year, fertilizer containing Phosphorus and Nitrogen is limited. Fertilizer use is also prohibited within 10 feet of a water body, seawall, or wetland. And, if you use a fertilizer spreader, you are required to have a deflector shield to prevent nutrient spread into water body buffers and impervious surfaces.

While it may be tempting to do your own fertilizing and insect control, it is probably better to contract the services of a licensed and trained specialist.