Summer Lawn Care Checklist

For established residential lawns during summer. Match mowing, watering and treatment decisions to your grass species, active growth, weather and local restrictions. Cool-season heat stress and warm-season summer growth require different care.

Date: _____ Grass type / location: _____ Weather / follow-up: _____

Before you start

- Identify grass species and location before selecting a summer routine; this is not a national fertilizer or watering calendar. New seed and sod need separate establishment guidance.
- Gather a rain gauge, notebook, mower manual and any product labels. Follow local water restrictions and keep people and pets away during mowing or treatments.
- Disconnect mower power before maintenance. Avoid working wet or severely stressed turf; uncertain plant-health problems need diagnosis before treatment.

Assess conditions

☐ **Identify grass type and summer growth pattern (Essential)**

Record species and whether growth is active, slowed or dormant. Use regional extension guidance; warm-season grass recommendations do not automatically suit cool-season lawns.

☐ **Review heat, rainfall and watering restrictions (Essential)**

Check recent rain and upcoming conditions before scheduling work. Legal watering windows and drought restrictions take priority over a preset timer.

☐ **Inspect the lawn for stress and unusual patches (Essential)**

Note wilting, persistent footprints or discolored areas. Compare affected locations and recent changes; brown turf is not automatically dead or an insect problem.

☐ **Choose a locally appropriate summer water strategy (Essential)**

For an established lawn, decide with local guidance whether to maintain growth or manage seasonal dormancy. Species, drought duration and restrictions matter; do not assume all dormant lawns need no water.

Mow without adding stress

☐ **Set a species-appropriate mowing height (Essential)**

Use local species guidance and the mower manual. Avoid imposing one tall setting on every grass; bermudagrass and cool-season lawn recommendations differ.

☐ **Mow according to growth rather than a fixed weekday (Essential)**

Avoid removing more than one-third of the leaf blade at a cut. Postpone mowing when heat or drought has stopped growth, and avoid wet turf.

☐ **Check mower condition before use (Essential)**

With power safely isolated, check blade condition and guards as the manual directs. Arrange sharpening or repairs if needed rather than tearing grass with a dull blade.

☐ **Return suitable clippings to the lawn (Essential)**

Leave light clippings when they disperse evenly. Break up heavy clumps and keep clippings off roads and drains; follow local disposal advice for contaminated material.

Manage water and traffic

☐ **Record rainfall and lawn response (Essential)**

Use a rain gauge and observe turf and soil conditions. Account for rain before adding irrigation; do not prescribe a universal runtime.

☐ **Check irrigation coverage and avoid waste (If Applicable)**

If irrigation is used.

Observe a normal permitted watering cycle for leaks, blocked heads, runoff and pavement overspray. Use the irrigation maintenance checklist for equipment work; do not enter electrical or pressurized components.

☐ **Adjust watering to conditions and allowed windows (If Applicable)**

If watering is needed and permitted.

Apply only the locally appropriate amount, allowing absorption rather than runoff. Avoid repeated shallow watering as a default routine; soil and species affect scheduling.

☐ **Reduce traffic on heat-stressed or dormant areas (Essential)**

Move play and foot traffic where practical. Avoid heavy equipment and renovation on drought-stressed turf; reassess once growth and moisture recover.

Treat only when appropriate

- [ ] **Decide whether fertilizer is appropriate now (If Applicable)**

  If fertilizer is being considered.

  Use soil-test and species-specific local advice. Defer fertilizer on drought-stressed or dormant turf. Healthy actively growing warm-season grass may have different summer needs; follow label and local nutrient rules.

- [ ] **Identify weeds, pests or disease before treatment (If Applicable)**

  If unusual weeds, pest damage or disease symptoms are present.

  Document symptoms and seek extension advice if uncertain. Check species suitability, heat limits and label restrictions before any product; avoid preventive applications without a diagnosed need.

- [ ] **Schedule major work in the correct growth window (If Applicable)**

  If renovation, aeration or overseeding is planned.

  Defer cool-season aeration or overseeding to a suitable regional recovery window. Warm-season renovation can differ; do not work severely stressed turf or assume every lawn should be seeded in summer.

- [ ] **Record completed work and follow-up dates (Essential)**

  Log weather, mowing, water and any treatments. Note unresolved patches and dates to reassess; adjust the routine as conditions change rather than repeating it automatically.

Notes / additional tasks

_____

_____