

Rules for maintaining a proper Floratam St. Augustine lawn:

WATERING. ONLY WATER WHEN NECESSARY. A little dryness encourages deep root development; a lot of dryness will kill your grass. Wait until leaf blades begin to fold. Generally 1" of water is required per week. Always set your irrigation system to water 1" in every zone (a Pi pan works in a pinch, rain gauges, or coffee cups). Occasionally (February-June) our drought conditions will require frequent watering, an adequate irrigation system is necessary. Florida generally has adequate rainfall to sustain Floratam during summer, fall, and winter seasons. Overwatering will *always* cause excessive weeds (dollarweed, sedges, & crabgrasses) and a weak, shallow root system. Damaging fungal infections of the turf is also caused by excessive moisture. Never water during the day. Plants naturally photosynthesize during the day and uptake water & nutrients and grow at night.

MOWING. MOW TALL, OFTEN, & WITH A SHARP BLADE. Floratam is a "standard" or large st. augustine variety. Mow at 4" or above. Use the highest setting on your lawn mower. Only remove 1/3 of the leaf blade during each mowing (sometimes you have to mow twice a week, sometimes twice a quarter) Use a sharp blade. A dull blade beats the grass blade apart leaving frayed edges, which quickly turn brown leaving your entire lawn with a brown haze. Scalping or mowing a lawn too short removes too much of the dark green leaf blade & exposes the pale green runners. A scalped lawn will *always* be weed prone and susceptible to disease because it is left weak, with exposed soil for weeds to germinate, and large wounds from runners being ripped apart; leaving exposed wounds for fungal diseases to enter the grass. Please note: There are "dwarf" varieties of st. augustine grass which are common in the Orlando and northern Central Florida areas. Some of those varieties should be mowed as low as 1.5". Most homes on the space and treasure coast built since the 80's have Floratam.

PROPER CHEMICAL CONTROL. YOU HAVE TO PROPERLY TREAT YOUR LAWN OR PAY SOMEONE TO DO IT. St. Augustine grass is not native to Florida however it has many pests. Preventative pesticide, herbicide, pre-emergent herbicide, and fertilizer are an absolute necessity. There are no treatments available for crabgrass (goose grass, sandspur). Pre-emergent herbicides sterilize the seeds but wind deposited seeds make crabgrass inevitable. If you want an absolutely weed free lawn; you will have to pull weeds manually on occasion. Especially the summer months. Proper control must be consistent. A neglected lawn will die quickly & is very difficult to resuscitate. *HOMEOWNERS should be very observant of pesticide & herbicide labels*, consumer products are frequently more toxic & antiquated when compared to professional pest control products. Herbicides should *always* be "tested" in a small (replaceable) section of turf.

Fun (or not) facts about Floratam St. Augustine grass:

-It was developed jointly from the university of FLORida And Texas A&M with the intention of being a chinch bug resistant variety of grass. (It's chinch bug resistance only lasted a few years and they are now a major pest)

-It is very easily injured by any traffic. Bahia is a much better choice for lawn with high foot traffic.

-It does not grow from seed. It has small flowers in summer, but cannot produce seed. St. Augustine has been so altered that its seeds are sterile.

-Floritam can be nearly or fully dormant from November to May here. If there is a freeze your lawn will look brown & dead until its growing season. Yes, we will do offer lawn painting or overseeding services at additional cost.

-Floritam is a full-sun grass. Any shady areas of your lawn will eventually be thinner.

-Large crabgrass can be controlled. Most grassy weeds (crabgrasses, goose grass, & sandspur) cannot be controlled. Some "home remedies" such as baking soda have shown promising results on grassy weeds. Baking soda is not a registered chemical for weed control and cannot be applied by any commercial applicator. *Always test any chemical control application in a small, inconspicuous area of your lawn first.*

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