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Counting Blessings **AND** Giving Thanks

Floridians are no strangers to the power of nature, living in a state where hurricanes are a part of life. Yet, when Helene and Milton barreled through our communities, they left behind a trail of destruction that was heart-wrenching and profound. Many of us have lost loved ones, homes filled with cherished memories, and businesses that represented dreams and livelihoods. In the aftermath, we are reminded of life's fragility and the importance of gratitude.

Reflecting on Loss and Resilience

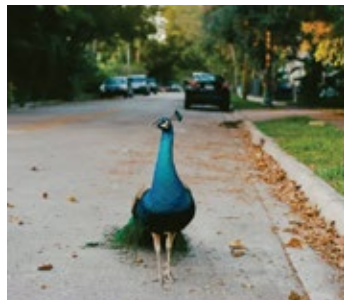
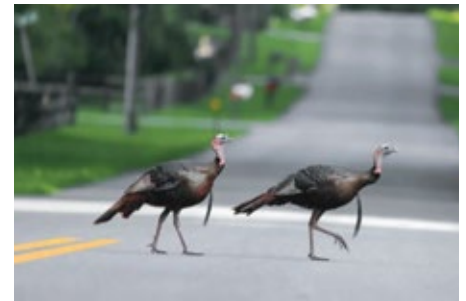
This Thanksgiving, the usual festivities of parades, food, and football take on a different hue. While these traditions continue, they are accompanied by a somber reflection on all that has been lost. In just one wave, everything dear to us—people, possessions, property—can be destroyed. It's a truth we know well but often forget in the daily grind of life. Yet, resilience is strong. Communities unite, sharing stories, supporting each other, and providing aid. Local organizations offer food, shelter, and help, showcasing community strength.

The Power of Gratitude

Gratitude aids healing. Recognizing what remains—family, friends, community—comforts us. We thank the professionals and volunteers who risked their lives to help others, embodying thankfulness and inspiring us to give back.

Moving Forward Together

Recovery will take time, but Thanksgiving reminds us of gratitude, community, and resilience. As we give thanks, we also give back, reinforcing community bonds. May your Thanksgiving be filled with gratitude and hope, and may the spirit of community and thankfulness shine brightly.



Navigating Turf Recovery After Milton

Hurricane Milton has left a lasting impact on landscapes, leading to widespread turf damage and posing significant challenges for recovery. Effective turfgrass management is crucial in ensuring the health and vitality of your landscape post-hurricane. Let's explore the key challenges and strategies for effectively tackling the aftermath.

Key Challenges & Management Strategies

Weed Issues

Challenge: Flooding and tidal surges have leached preemergence herbicides, reducing their effectiveness and replenishing the weed seed bank.

Management Strategy: Adjust herbicide programs to account for diluted or washed-away treatments. Monitor weed growth closely and respond with targeted control measures to prevent overwhelming infestations.

Soil Fertility & Turfgrass Health

Challenge: Prolonged submersion and saturated soils have damaged root systems. Floodwaters may introduce salts and toxic contaminants.

Management Strategy: Conduct soil tests to determine salt levels and nutrient imbalances. Aerate the turf once the ground can support machinery to alleviate compaction and restore oxygen to the roots. Follow up with top-dressing to promote root recovery and improve soil health.

Tree Health

Challenge: Standing trees with limb loss are at risk for insects and diseases. Tree mortality varies based on flood and salt tolerance levels.

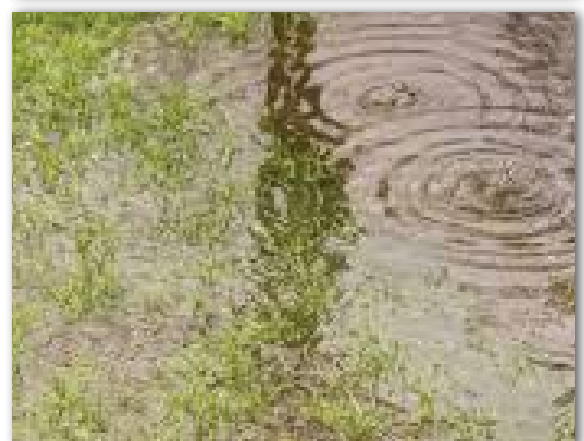
Management Strategy: Evaluate trees for damage and potential recovery, removing those beyond saving. Pay attention to the shedding patterns of evergreen trees and the root stability of deciduous trees.

Submerged Turfgrass

Challenge: High sea surface temperatures during Hurricane Milton have affected turf survival, and long-term submersion in turbid water can lead to significant damage.

Management Strategy: Understand species-specific tolerances to water temperature and submersion duration. Implement aeration to break up soil layers and facilitate recovery if damage is manageable.

Understanding Hurricane Milton's specific impacts on turfgrass and trees is essential for effective recovery. By implementing recommended strategies and engaging in continuous monitoring, property managers and homeowners can ensure a thriving landscape. Remember, the landscape's recovery is an ongoing process, and adjusting management practices as conditions evolve will be key to success.



Pests That Remain High Post-Hurricane

For those of you hardest hit by recent hurricanes, you have our deepest sympathies. It's a challenging time, and as you assess the damage and consider what can be saved, pest management might not be at the top of your priorities. Yet, as we move into the post-hurricane season, it's crucial to be aware of the potential pest invasion that could wreak havoc on your property.

After a hurricane, especially with the flooding experienced across Florida, pests become more active. They are searching for shelter, warmth, and new food sources. Fall can thus become a period of increased pest activity, posing a threat to your lawn and overall property health. By remaining vigilant and proactive, you can mitigate the effects of these pests before significant damage occurs.



Fall Armyworms

Survival of fall armyworm eggs is highest following warm, humid climatic conditions following summer rains. During the day, they huddle near the thatch layer and only venture out to eat the top of plants when it's cooler. Scouting early in the morning or just after dusk is best. Early detection is a primary key to controlling potential fall armyworm problems because fully mature larvae can completely consume a lawn overnight.



White Grubs

Grubs thrive in moist soil and love to feed on roots, causing scattered brown patches. Damage occurs mainly because the insect destroys the grass's root system, and the grass can no longer absorb water. Symptoms of a grub infestation include patches of dead grass that easily pull away from the soil and an increase in the presence of birds or other animals digging in your lawn.



Tropical Sod Webworm

Sod webworms will likely continue to be a problem in the fall with all the rain we have had because moist conditions created by rainfall can significantly increase their population and activity. The first sign of damage is differences in grass height caused by the feeding larvae. They destroy the appearance, density, and overall life cycle of the grass it



Mole Crickets

Pests like mole crickets can become a problem after a hurricane because of the excess water and new entry points created by the storm. They can cause extensive damage by feeding on grass roots, tunneling near the soil surface, and dislodging plants until they dry out. They can destroy the grass's density and cause patches in the lawn.

On Point with Poinsettias

Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant and the number one flowering potted plant in the United States. Ironically, poinsettia plants are native to Mexico's warm climate, but we use them as a celebratory item during the coldest month.

Once upon a time, you could only find the classic red poinsettia for purchase, but today, there are over 200 varieties available, including more than 100 reds. They vary in "bloom" form, number of blooms, pattern on leaves, and size. Nearly every year, a new, exciting variety is released, with different poinsettia varieties to suit any taste.

Straight-Up or Pinched

"**Straight-up**" poinsettias have a longer production schedule and are the ones florists prefer. They are allowed to grow without pinching, leading to a stunning display with a single large inflorescence adorned with enlarged bracts. It's common to find about three to four plants per pot, creating a lush, clustered look. Straight-ups are a classic and beloved style of poinsettia that many people enjoy!

"**Pinched**" poinsettias are the most popular type of poinsettia because the pinching process encourages bushier growth with more branches. This results in a fuller, more attractive plant with a wider display of colored bracts.



Growing and Maintenance Tips

Poinsettias have been encouraged to bloom just in time for the holidays, so they'll appreciate a bit of extra care to keep their beautiful blossoms shining all season long!

They like full sun.

They dislike being jostled.

They resent getting hit with drafts.

As far as how often to water poinsettia, you'll have to go by feel; they prefer soil that's moist but not waterlogged. But remember that if a poinsettia plant gets dried out, it will greatly reduce plant longevity.

Fun Facts

Joel Roberts Poinsett, a botanist and physician, introduced the poinsettia to the United States. December 12 is National Poinsettia Day: This day marks the death of Joel Roberts Poinsett. December 12 is National Poinsettia Day.

Poinsettias can grow up to 15 feet tall. In their native tropical environment in Mexico and Central America, they are perennial woody shrubs that grow as high as 10 to 15 feet tall—more like small trees than houseplants.

Poinsettias are not poisonous: While it's not recommended for people or animals to eat poinsettias, a 50 lb. child would have to eat 500 leaves to have a major reaction. If you have a latex allergy might find skin contact with poinsettia sap irritates their skin.

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