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## **Bermudagrass Lawns are Confused—Is it Winter or Spring?**

You may have heard of the perfect storm. Well, turfgrass managers and homeowners in Tulsa will now be battling the perfect conditions for spring winterkill and damage on bermudagrass turf—too early spring green-up followed by record freezing temperatures in early April. It seems that we had our April in March, and our March in April this year. The bermudagrass does not know what to do!

Our March was the warmest on record, leading to early green-up of turf and budding of plants and trees. On April 1<sup>st</sup> in Tulsa, it looked more like May 1<sup>st</sup>, with green bermudagrass lawns needing to be mowed already. “I’ve been in the turfgrass industry for over 22 years in Tulsa,” said Brad Johnson, owner of LawnAmerica based in Tulsa. “I’ve never seen the bermudagrass this green this early. I knew that with the green, lush conditions, if we had one our late spring freezes, the bermudagrass would really be hit hard. As soon as I thought it, sure enough it happened!”

With temperatures getting down to the mid-20’s last week, bermuda lawns that were once green are now turning a brown to yellowish color. The change in color is similar to bermudagrass going into winter dormancy in mid to late fall. However this change was very dramatic, and came at a time when the turf was in the process of greening-up and coming out of dormancy.

“It’s too early to tell if areas of bermuda were actually killed, or will green back up,” says Johnson. If the turf was thick, healthy, and not mowed down too short before the freeze, the grass blades and stems may be brown, but the crown and root system should be fine. As the weather warms on into April and early May, most turf should initiate new green growth from the roots and crown and recover just fine. All one can do is just be patient, and practice good cultural practices, including fertilization to help initiate new growth. I’ve learned that we are not in charge of Mother Nature, so why worry,” said Johnson.

If areas of turf were actually killed, re-sodding or plugging healthy bermudagrass may be in order later in the spring. Don't jump to conclusions though, as it is still early. Let nature take it's course. Bermuda is a hardy grass, but it is a warm-season grass; it does not like cold weather. It may be mid-May now before it recovers and looks as green as it did in late March, but with warmer weather, adequate moisture, and proper fertilization, it should be fine—we hope!

## **About LawnAmerica**

Brad Johnson is the owner of LawnAmerica—a successful local and regional lawn care company based in Tulsa, specializing in weed-control and fertilization. LawnAmerica's address is 5129 S. 110th E Ave in Tulsa, Oklahoma 74146, their phone number is (918) 249-LAWN, and their Web site address is [www.LawnAmerica.com/tulsa](http://www.LawnAmerica.com/tulsa).

