



Maintenance for Wintergreen Couch;

Wintergreen Couch is a popular choice for Queensland lawns due to its fine leaf, bright green colour, and excellent durability. It thrives in full sun and has good drought tolerance. Here's a breakdown of its maintenance, keeping the Queensland climate in mind:

1. Mowing:

- **Frequency:** Wintergreen Couch is a vigorous grower in warm weather and benefits from regular mowing.
 - **Summer (Wet Season):** Mow frequently, typically every 7-10 days, to maintain its density and formal appearance. Some sources even suggest as often as every 5-7 days for a perfectly manicured look.
 - **Autumn:** As growth slows with cooler temperatures, reduce mowing to every 2-3 weeks.
 - **Winter (Current Season: June - August):** Growth will significantly slow down. Mow every 3-5 weeks, or as needed. You're currently in winter, so expect reduced mowing.
- **Height:**
 - **Ideal:** Wintergreen Couch tolerates low mowing and looks best when kept short. Aim for a height between **15mm and 30mm** for home lawns. For a very formal look (like a golf green), it can be mowed as low as 6mm.
 - **"One-Third Rule":** Never remove more than one-third of the leaf blade in a single mow to avoid stressing the grass.
 - **Thatch Reduction (Spring):** In early spring, you can perform a very low mow (around 10-15mm) to help remove built-up thatch and encourage new growth.
- **Sharp Blades:** Always use sharp mower blades to ensure a clean cut and prevent tearing, which can lead to disease.
- **Catch Clippings:** It's generally recommended to catch and remove clippings, especially if you're trying to minimise thatch buildup.

2. Watering:

- **Deep and Infrequent (Established Lawn):** Wintergreen Couch has a deep root system, making it quite drought-tolerant once established.
- **When to Water:** Water when you notice signs of stress, such as the grass losing its vibrant green colour, footprints remaining on the lawn, or the blades starting to curl inwards.
- **Amount:** Aim for a deep watering that penetrates the soil to at least 100-150mm. This encourages roots to grow deeper. For established lawns, 10-25mm of water per week during the growing season is a general guideline.

- **Timing:** The best time to water is in the early morning. This minimises water loss due to evaporation and allows the foliage to dry before nightfall, reducing the risk of fungal diseases.
- **Queensland Seasons:**
 - **Summer (Wet Season):** With Queensland's summer rainfall, you may not need to irrigate as much. During dry spells or heatwaves, a deep water 1-2 times a week should be sufficient.
 - **Autumn & Spring:** Water as needed, based on rainfall and observations of the lawn.
 - **Winter (Current Season):** Growth is significantly reduced, so your watering needs will be minimal. Only water if the soil is very dry and there's no rainfall, or if you're in a frost-prone area and want to help with frost recovery (see below). Wintergreen holds its colour well in winter but can brown off with frost.
- **Frost:** If you're in a frost-affected area of Queensland (which is less common in coastal areas like Clear Island Waters but can occur further inland), your Wintergreen Couch may brown off.
 - **Before Frost:** A deep watering before a cold snap can help.
 - **During Frost:** Avoid walking on frost-covered grass as it can damage the blades.
 - **After Frost:** Once the frost has melted, a light water can assist recovery. Wait about 30 days after a frost event before applying nitrogen-based fertilisers.

3. Fertilizing:

- **Frequency:** Wintergreen Couch responds well to regular fertilisation.
 - **Growing Season (Spring/Summer/Early Autumn):** Fertilise 3-4 times a year. A good schedule for Queensland would be:
 - **Early Spring (September/October):** As the lawn comes out of winter dormancy and starts actively growing.
 - **Early Summer (December/January):** To support vigorous growth during the peak season.
 - **Late Summer/Early Autumn (March/April):** To help the lawn recover from summer stress and build up nutrient reserves for winter.
 - **Winter (Current Season):** Avoid heavy nitrogen applications in winter. A light application of a complete fertiliser high in potassium (K) and iron (Fe) in late autumn can help with winter colour retention and root health, but generally, fertilising is not recommended in the depths of winter (June/July) in Queensland, especially if you are in a frost prone area or want to reduce winter growth.
- **Type:** Use a quality slow-release granular lawn fertilizer with a balanced NPK ratio. Wintergreen Couch also benefits from iron (Fe) supplements to maintain its vibrant green colour without promoting excessive growth.
- **Application:** Always water your lawn immediately after fertilising to help the nutrients reach the soil and prevent leaf burn.

4. Weed Control:

- **Prevention:** A dense, healthy Wintergreen Couch lawn will naturally outcompete many weeds. Ensure proper mowing, watering, and fertilising.
- **Pre-emergent Herbicides:** Apply a pre-emergent herbicide in early spring and late summer/early autumn to prevent weed seeds from germinating.
- **Post-emergent Herbicides:** For existing broadleaf weeds, use a selective herbicide that is **safe for couch grasses**. Always read the label carefully, as some broadleaf herbicides can damage couch varieties. For Nutgrass, specifically look for products like Sempra.
- **Hand Weeding:** For a few scattered weeds, hand removal is effective.
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5. Thatch Management:

- Wintergreen Couch can be prone to thatch buildup due to its vigorous stoloniferous growth.
- **Dethatching (Verticutting/Scarification):** Dethatch every 1-3 years as needed. This involves removing the layer of dead grass material that can build up on the soil surface, hindering water and nutrient penetration.
- **Timing:** The best time to dethatch is in late spring to early summer (around November in Queensland) when the grass is actively growing and can recover quickly. Mow the lawn at a lower height before dethatching, then remove the thatch. Follow with a light fertilisation and deep watering.

6. Pest and Disease Control:

- Wintergreen Couch is generally resistant to most diseases.
- **Monitor:** Regularly inspect your lawn for signs of insect activity (e.g., armyworms, lawn grubs) or disease.
- **Treatment:** If problems arise, identify the pest or disease and apply appropriate treatments (insecticides or fungicides), following label directions carefully. Good lawn care practices (proper mowing, watering, and fertilising) are the best defence against most issues.

By following these maintenance practices, your Wintergreen Couch lawn in Gold Coast, Queensland, should remain a beautiful, durable, and low-maintenance turf all year round.