Florida may be a retreat from the cold, but extreme weather can push freezing temperatures into The Sunshine State. When a freeze hits, it's important to know what actions to take (or avoid), to prepare your turf.

BOLD TO BLAND

Most grasses naturally lose color in winter. This uniform dulling or yellowing is in fact, a good sign – indicating the turf is conserving resources properly. Avoid applying nitrogen during cool months. Such "force feeding" during dormancy can hinder healthy root development and even encourage cool-season weeds.

WATCH YOUR STEP

Avoid mowing or walking on grass during or right after a freeze. Grass blades, brittle from the cold, will break easily, and foot traffic will leave yellow track marks. This damage is superficial and will fade as the grass grows. Patience is key since growth will be slow during dormancy.

WATER FOR WINTER

Perhaps the most important factor that will affect how well your turf withstands a freeze is its root system. Watering as outlined below helps roots grow deeply; and deep roots stay well insulated from icy conditions. During cooler months, reduce watering as needed.

DEANS SERVICES — RECOMMENDED WATERING SCHEDULE

	Amount	Times weekly	MP Time*	PGP Time*
86°+	3/4"	3	105 mins	45 mins
76-85°	1/2"	2	70 mins	30 mins
46-75°	1/2"	1	70 mins	30 mins
< 46°	Do not water			

GO LONG

When mowing in autumn and winter, allow your grass to grow a little bit longer. We recommend 3.5 – 4" for St. Augustine and 2 – 3" for Zoysia. This helps protect from invasive weeds and allows growth of your root system when it's most important.

TOUGHEN YOUR TURF

A well-balanced, year-round fertilization program is critical for creating a winter-hardy lawn. Without one, cold snaps will weaken your lawn, causing thin areas to appear and cool-season weeds to take root. These weeds will out-compete your turf, allowing warm season weeds to take their place later in the season. This leads to an uphill battle against weeds all year.

Below is an unaltered photo of two lawns. The Deans lawn on the left was provided with our balanced nutrient blend for a winter-ready root system. The lawn on the right was not. While minor dormancy fading still occurred, the benefit of a program is clear.

During cooler months, Deans helps root growth and protects against fungal pathogens by increasing our potassium application. We also spot treat those wily winter weeds. If you haven't already, we hope you'll choose Deans - for a healthy lawn all year round!

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