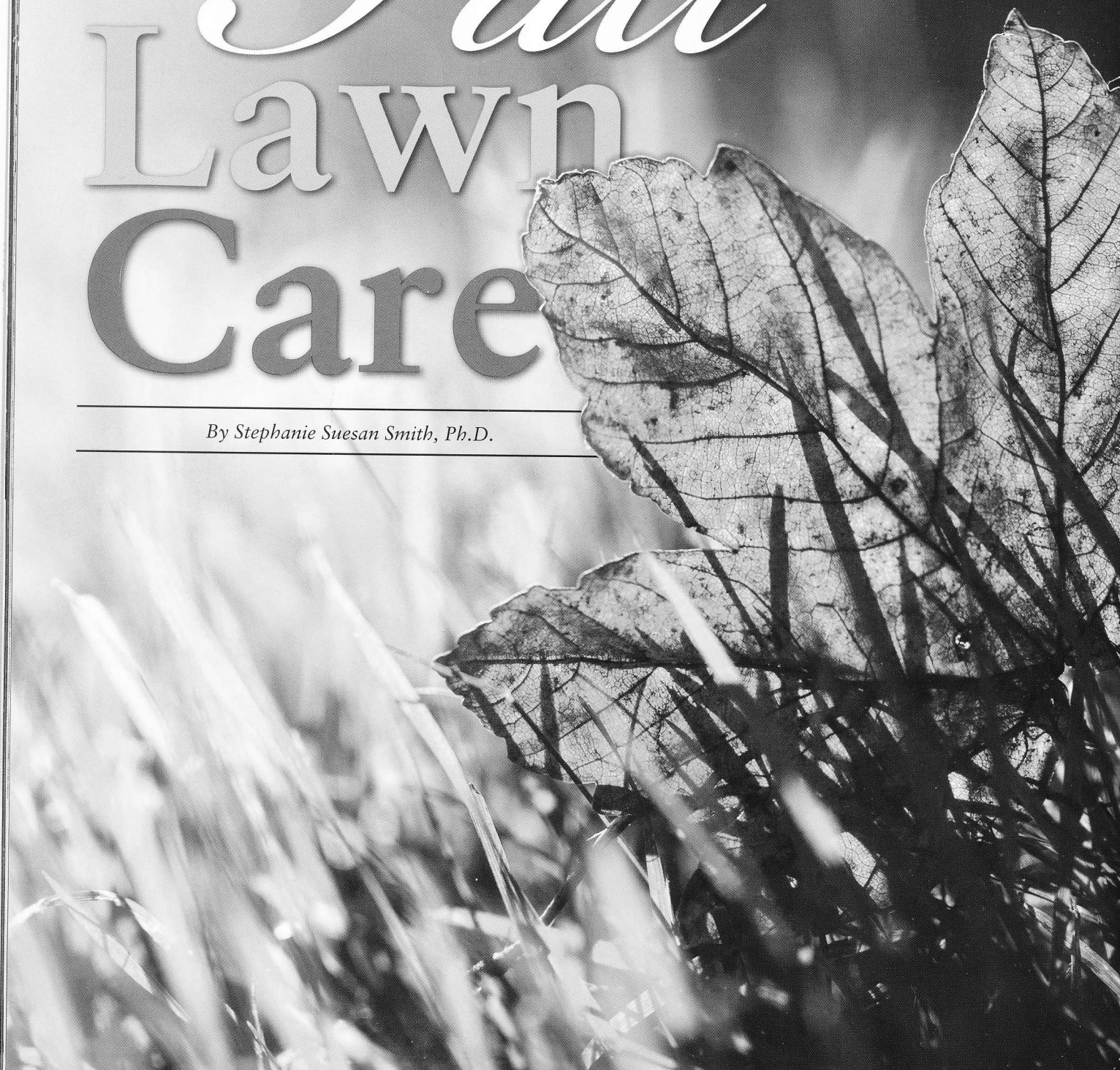


Master Gardeners

Fall Lawn Care

By Stephanie Suesan Smith, Ph.D.





With the cooler weather, lawns stop growing and try to store carbohydrates for the winter.

Be sure that all the leaves are removed from your lawn so that it gets as much sun as possible to make these carbohydrates. St. Augustine in particular will continue to make carbohydrates through most of our milder winters. Be sure and compost your leaves to use for fertilizer this spring.

Be sure to water your lawn over the winter to prevent it from drying out if there is little rain water at least once a month. More lawns die from not enough water than from winter freezes in this region.

It is too late to spread fertilizer over your lawn, but a one-half inch layer of compost spread throughout the turfgrass will be watered in by the rainy season and help the grass grow thickly next spring. Thick grass will choke out most weeds.

Cool-season weeds start small this fall but become a major problem later in the winter. You can forestall this by spreading a post emergence broadleaf weed control before the weeds stop growing for the season and go dormant. Note that broadleaf weed controls cannot be used on St. Augustine. The other cure for such weeds is to grow your lawn lush and thick in the spring so that weeds are choked out naturally.

By doing a few things this time of year, you should have a healthy, lush lawn in the spring. *903*