



How To Get Rid of Bare Patches in a Shady Lawn

"I am unable to grow grass of heavy shade. I have tried seeding and St. Augustine sod. Nothing has worked and now I have mostly dirt. Any suggestions?" Is one of the most frequently asked questions we get regarding lawn care.

Over the years, we have heard countless people tell us their horror stories about spending thousands of dollars replacing the grass in the shady areas of their lawns. Then time after time, they end up watching it disappear a year later.

We always tell them, if the conditions are right to grow grass, it will fill into an area by itself. But if not, installing sod or seeding is only going to cause you to waste money and become frustrated..

We believe in education first and foremost, so let me share the rules of thumb for turf sun requirements.

- Bermuda needs about 8 hours of sunlight to survive.
- St. Augustine needs about 6 to establish, once established you can plant a tree and as the tree casts more shade the St. Augustine will gradually acclimate to less light (which explains why your neighbor may have thick St. Augustine under his trees and you don't).
- Zoysia is starting to become popular and has similar light requirements as St. Augustine.
- Fescue doesn't mind the shade, but it's a cheap short-term solution because you have to replant it each year.

Right about now you are probably thinking, what if I prune my tree limbs. If I cut them back, I'll get more sun and it will fix my problem. It's a logical thought, but please do not prune you trees in order to grow grass in your bare spots. It is a bad idea. Thinning trees is like removing an arm or two of an umbrella. At the end of the day you are still going to have an umbrella, albeit, an ugly one! Studies have shown there is virtually no difference in the light hitting the ground under a thinned tree versus one that has been thinned. Pruning a tree can be great for a tree, but don't do it with the hope it will help the grass underneath it.

So what's the solution? Surely something can be done to make those dirt patch area look better. The best solution is acceptance. If you have a shady area you need to accept it, and adapt to it by installing plants that like the shade. There are plenty of ground covers and shrubs that do well in little to no light. Most of the landscapes we install are in very heavy shade. If you can accept the shade, and find plants that thrive in the shade, you can easily change an eyesore to a pleasant spot where you can escape the brutal Texas summer heat.

If you need help finding solutions for your lawn, give us a call at 972-495-6990, email me at ken@villagegreen-inc.org or fill out our contact form. I'd be happy to answer any questions.