



THE TURF PROS

"The grass is greener on our side!"

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Preparation Guide for Spring Seeding

Step One: Proper Seeds

Now that the snow has melted, you might be seeing some areas damaged from snow plows or other winter vehicle traffic that need repair.

Seed planted now (late March) will begin to germinate in early to mid-April. The earlier in the year that you seed, the more time the turf will have for root development before summer. Additionally, the more time it will have to establish and compete with summer annual weeds.

Although any cool-season grass can be seeded in the spring, spring seedings are more successful with tall fescue and perennial ryegrass than with Kentucky bluegrass. This is because of the faster germination rate and better seedling vigor of perennial ryegrass and tall fescue compared to Kentucky bluegrass.

Keep in mind that spring seeding and preemergence herbicides don't go hand-in-hand. All preemergence herbicides (except Tupersan) work to prevent the emergence of turfgrass seeds as well as weed seeds, so do not reseed areas treated with a preemergence herbicide this spring or do not apply a preemergence herbicide if you plan on seeding.

Step Two: Proper Soil Preparation

One must prepare the soil so that proper seed/soil contact is made, allowing for germination. Raking the soil breaks up the top layer and allows the seed to penetrate through deeper.

For existing lawns, a core-aeration is the preferred method. Core aeration creates thousands of 1-3" holes in your lawn, allowing oxygen, nutrients and the seed to come into contact with deeper soil.

Step Three: Fertilizing

Fertilizer applications are critical for the development of a healthy established turf. Following the application of starter fertilizer (19-19-19). New seedlings need ½ lb. of nitrogen

per 1,000 sq. ft. every 4 weeks. This nitrogen level can be applied in various forms of fertilizer (22-0-8, 24-0-12, etc) and will result in a much healthier, thicker lawn than a lawn not fertilized. The fertility requirements provide the nutrients for growth and the ability to fight off diseases, weeds and insect infestation. This means, a fertilizing application should be applied to your new lawn areas at 4 weeks and at 8 weeks after the installation date. Once the lawn has been established, a yearly maintenance program should be set up to maintain a healthy, vital turf.

Step Four: Covering

For large areas it is best that you cover the seed using Straw. This not only protects the seed, it also retains both moisture and warmth for the young seed.

Step Five: Proper Watering

Water is the most important factor in establishing a lawn. After the initial deep soaking to a soil depth of 4" to 5", follow-up irrigation should be done daily. Soil within the top ½" should be kept consistently moist. Initially this may require early morning, mid-day and evening watering; of about ¼" to ½" each time. A good way to determine how much water is being applied to the soil is to place a container (i.e. a coffee can) in the sprinkler's path and time how long it takes to collect ½" of water. Daily irrigation (¼" to ½") should be continued for 3 to 4 weeks. During hot or dry conditions, you may need to increase the watering during the early morning and evening watering time to maintain moisture in the soil surface.

SPECIAL NOTE: To maintain a uniform watering schedule, a water faucet timer should be used to set the various watering times throughout these critical weeks. Remember - keep a consistent moist environment for proper grass seed germination.

After four weeks, your new lawn still requires a minimum of 1" of water a week for continued growth. The watering schedule, at this point of establishment, can be changed to twice a week before with a deep soaking of ½" or more of water. But during hot or dry conditions, watering should occur during early morning hours until the lawn matures.

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