

STARTING A NEW LAWN FROM SEED

A lush, green, well-kept lawn can add beauty and value to your home while providing a play and recreation area for your family. You'll probably spend more time and money on your lawn than on any other part of your landscape. By starting off right, you'll save both time and money in the long run. Whether to use seed, sod or plugs for your new lawn depends on the type of turfgrass you choose and your budget. Sod is the most expensive but gives you a beautiful lawn more quickly. Most people choose planting from seed as this is the most economical method of planting a lawn. Our Certified Nursery Professionals will be happy to help you choose the right grass and planting method for your new lawn. Many types of turfgrasses will provide a beautiful lawn for your home. Choosing the right grass depends on how sunny/shady the area is, your city's temperature range, your maintenance needs, and your personal preference. Here's some of the more popular turfgrasses which can be started from seed.

BERMUDA

Bermuda grass is the most disease and drought tolerant grass seed. Bermuda's beautiful, permanent, thick turf spreads quickly and tolerates traffic well. Bermuda is a warm season grass which goes dormant in Winter and greens up with the warmth of Spring. By overseeding a Bermuda lawn with annual ryegrass or perennial ryegrass in Winter, you can have a green lawn all year. Plant Bermuda when soil temperatures are above 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Sow Bermuda grass seed at the rate of 1 pound per 50 square feet. Mow to a height of 1/2 inch to 1 1/2 inches.

TALL FESCUE

Tall fescue turfgrasses such as Kentucky-31 (K-31), 5 Star, Creeping Red, Mellenium, are cool season northern turfgrasses which are tough enough to withstand Southern Summers. Fescue does well in shade and survives Winter well, staying green all year. In hot Summers, fescue may turn brown unless you water every 3 to 4 days. Do not overwater in Summer as this may cause disease problems. Plant tall fescue when soil temperatures are above 55 degrees. Early April through May or late-September through October are best. Sow at 1 pound per 150 square feet. Mow 2 inches to 3 inches tall.

ANNUAL RYE

Excellent for overseeding older lawns, annual rye provides a temporary lawn only. Annual rye does well in sunny areas. It is most often used as a Winter green-up for established lawns. Sow at a rate of 1 pound of seed per 150 square feet. Mow 1 1/2 inches to 2 inches tall. Your lawn will go from brown to green in just a week with Annual Ryegrass as it normally germinates in 7 – 10 days.

PERENNIAL RYEGRASS

Fineleaf perennial ryegrass is excellent for both overseeding older lawns and for starting new lawns. The suggested overseeding rate for perennial ryegrass is about 5 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Perennial rye has a deep green color and a finer blade than annual rye. Sow perennial rye for a new lawn at a rate of 1 pound per 150 square feet. Mow 1 1/2 inches to 2 inches tall.

HOW TO PLANT

Step 1: Kill Existing Weeds

Killing weeds before you plant will save you a lot of frustration later. We recommend 2 ways to do this. Spray the entire area with a weed killer containing glyphosate such as Roundup or Hi Yield Killzall. This will kill vegetation without contaminating the soil. Repeat 3 or 4 times at 1 to 2 week intervals to kill any new weeds that sprout or remove all existing weeds with a hoe, then water. Wait 1 to 2 weeks for new weeds to come up and then use Roundup or Killzall. Repeat 3 to 4 times. Do not use any other weed killers or pre-emergent granules as the residues left in the soil will kill or damage new grass.

Step 2: Prepare the Soil

Till the soil 4 to 6 inches deep. Add topsoil to level and fill in low spots. Work into the soil a 2 inch layer of Peatmoss or Nature Life Composted Cotton Burs, condition and aerate. If the soil is claylike or hard, till in 100 pounds of gypsum per 1,000 square feet of lawn area to keep the soil from packing. Soil conditioners must be added now as they cannot be introduced once the lawn is established.

Step 3: Rake

Rake ground smooth and free of clods, foreign matter and other debris. Water gently to settle soil. If the ground settles unevenly, add more topsoil to fill in low spots. Water again.

Step 4: Fertilize

Add a high phosphorus fertilizer such as Fertilome New Lawn Starter. This will encourage vigorous root development essential to the growth of the grass. You may also add sulphur to correct our "alkaline" soil.

Step 5: Plant

It's time to plant! Scatter seed with a hand-held seeder for even, efficient results. It has 3 settings for different types of seed and is excellent for fertilizer application later on! Calculate the number of pounds of seed required to plant the entire area using recommended rates. Divide the seed into 2 equal lots. Seed the entire area at half the recommended rate with the first lot in rows going East and West. Then reseed with the second lot in rows running North and South. Touch up edges and corners by hand. Mixing Bermuda seed with some sand will help to make it spread evenly. Cover the planted area with a light topping (1/8 inch to 1/2 inch thick) of Peat Moss.

Step 6: Water, Water, Water

Watering is all important now! When planting grass seed, the soil must be kept moist. Water with a gentle spray to a depth of 4 to 6 inches immediately after planting. Then water 2 to 3 times daily, as needed, to keep the soil moist. NEVER LET THE SOIL DRY OUT COMPLETELY or the germinating seed will die. Once the lawn is established, increase the depth of watering and decrease the frequency.

Step 7: Mowing

When the new lawn reaches a height of about 3 inches, it's time to mow. Mowing heights are given above for each grass type. Mow in alternate directions each time to avoid compacting the soil. Do not mow wet grass.

Step 8: Feed

Fertilize again with Fertilome New Lawn Starter the first mowing. One bag covers 5,000 square feet. Water it in. Fertilize every 6 – 8 weeks thereafter with Fertilome Southwest Greenmaker (with iron, sulphur, zinc and magnesium) which helps avoid "feast" and "famine" feeding since it contains both "fast" and "slow" release nitrogen sources. Apply Fertilome Winterizer (with iron, sulphur, zinc and magnesium) in late Fall. This Fall feeding will help produce hardening of late growth, resistance to cold, and a vigorous root system in cold weather areas.

Step 9: Weeding

Use no weed killers for the first year as new grass is highly sensitive. If weeds should appear, pull them or hoe them while they are very young. Never allow weeds to mature and go to seed. Roundup (glyphosate) may be used to spot treat weeds if absolutely necessary. Do not allow it to drift onto the grass.

Step 10: Controlling Insects and Disease

If pest problems show up after planting, bring in a sample of the insects and damaged grass to our Certified Nursery Professionals for diagnosis and advice.

If you have any question please call, write or drop by:

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