

OVERSEEDING BERMUDAGRASS

Tired of that lawn you've worked so hard on all season going dormant for the winter? Overseeding your bermudagrass lawn is the way to keep it lush and green all year long. Overseeding bermudagrass with a cool-season grass, such as annual or perennial ryegrass will give you a green lawn in the winter. The overseeded cool-season grass will stay green until your bermudagrass comes out of dormancy as temperatures increase in the spring. When the bermudagrass is growing actively, it will outgrow the ryegrass, leaving a lush, uniform turf. Do not try to overseed a lawn that has been treated recently with a preemergent herbicide. Overseeding is best done as the seasons change in late September through mid October.

ANNUAL RYE

The benefits of annual ryegrass are that it germinates quickly, is cold tolerant, and that it is sun tolerant in cool weather. It also has a nice fine leaf blade. It is very easy to grow and you can rest assured that it will not compete with your bermudagrass in the spring. Warm weather will kill annual rye. The disadvantage is that its quality as a turfgrass is not usually as high as with perennial ryegrass. New cultivars are being bred, however, and **Panterra Annual Ryegrass** is a high quality overseeding ryegrass that makes a dense winter turf. It won't require frequent mowing during the winter, but should be kept mowed between 2 and 3 inches tall. Overseed at a rate of 1 lb. for every 100-150 sq. feet.

PERENNIAL RYEGRASS

Fineleaf perennial ryegrass is excellent for overseeding bermuda lawns. Perennial rye has a deep green color and a finer blade than annual rye. It also makes a high quality cool-season turfgrass. The disadvantage of using perennial ryegrass over annual ryegrass is that you may have patches of rye competing with your bermudagrass next spring. This is really only an issue if your bermuda is thin in some areas. It will eventually choke out all of the perennial ryegrass if it is well maintained. Sow perennial rye at a rate of 1 pound per 150 square feet. Mow between 2 and 3 inches tall.

HOW TO PLANT:

Step 1: Kill Existing Weeds

Killing weeds before you plant will save you a lot of frustration later. If you have a bermudagrass lawn and plan to overseed, we recommend using **Ferti-lome Bermuda Grass Weeder** to kill those weeds. It will kill existing broadleaf and grassy weeds, leaving no residual effect on your soil. If temperatures are cool, try using **Ferti-lome Weed Free Zone**. It has superior performance in cool weather when most herbicides are ineffective.

Step 2: Prepare the Area

Before you overseed, mow your existing turf lower than normal. This will allow better soil contact for the seed, as well as better light and water penetration. If you have areas of heavy thatch, consider loosening that thatch layer with a rake.

Step 3: Fertilize

Add a high phosphorus fertilizer such as **Ferti-lome 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 4: Plant

It's time to plant! Scatter seed with a fertilizer spreader or hand-held seeder for even, efficient results. The hand seeder 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. Cover the planted area with a light topping (1/8 inch to 1/4 inch thick) of Peat Moss.

Step 5: 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. Watering frequency will depend on weather conditions. You don't want the area to be soggy, but 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 6: Mowing

When the new lawn reaches a height of about 3 inches, it's time to mow. You won't need to take off more than an inch, but mowing will help provide a more uniform look. Mow in alternate directions each time to avoid compacting the soil. Do not mow wet grass.

Step 7: Feed

Fertilize again with **Ferti-lome New Lawn Starter** after the first mowing. One bag covers 5,000 square feet. Water it in. Fertilize thereafter with **Ferti-lome 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. You won't need to fertilize during the coldest part of winter, but by late February, the ryegrass will be ready for fertilization. It will also be safe and a good idea to put down a preemergent herbicide, such as **Ferti-lome Avert**. This will help keep weeds out of the bermuda grass as it breaks dormancy.

Step 8: Weeding

Use no weed killers on your overseeded lawn. If weeds should appear, pull them or hoe them while they are very young. Never allow weeds to mature and go to seed.

Step 10: Controlling Insects and Disease

Most insects and diseases will not be active during the cool months. However, it is not uncommon for us to have periods of warm weather in the winter. 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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