

New Lawns – Instructions after Seeding or Sodding

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWLY SEEDED LAWNS

Over or under-watering a newly seeded area will dramatically affect the rate (success) of seed germination. *Ideally* the newly seeded lawn should be misted lightly three times a day until germination takes place (which takes place in 7 to 10 days when the maximum daily air temperatures are 75 or warmer, 10 to 14 days when that temperature ranges between 65 and 75, and as long as three to four week when that temperature ranges from 50 to 65. *Of course three times a day (which translates to mid morning, around noon and mid afternoon) is often impractical*, so at least try to make sure you mist the lawn at least once if not more a day. Note heavy watering may actually wash seed away. Three to five days after you note that germination has started (*depending upon the type of seed and time of year that can vary See Germination rates below*) you may change that misting to a light watering every other day for at least two weeks. Then a gentle but somewhat heavier watering every three to four days for the next two weeks. Note if it rains more than a 1/4" of an inch you may skip that day in your calculation as to when to water next. I.E. If you are on a 3 to 4 day schedule that would change to a 4 to 5 day period in between YOUR watering the seed. After that period a single moderate watering per week is all that should be necessary, unless this is in the hottest part of summer (July through August) when you should always use a 3 to 4 day schedule unless we have significant rains (1" or more) that week.

Now for the most important instruction – **DO NOT MOW THE NEWLY SEEDED AREA UNTIL THE GRASS IS 3 to 4 INCHES TALL!!!!** *If you are seeding in the Fall this may mean don't mow at all until next Spring.* Most people use a rotary mower which relies on the creation of a vacuum to get the grass to stand up and be cut. That vacuum is strong enough to lift the seed off the ground (thus interrupting the germination process) or if seeds have sprouted, actually yanking the new grass right out of the ground killing it altogether! Unless you have a reel (not a real) mower do not attempt to mow the newly seeded area until the grass is 3 to 4 inches tall. That may mean waiting as long as 8 weeks or more! I know you're disappointed over not being able to conduct your most favorite household chore, mowing, but what can I tell you. More newly seed lawns have been destroyed by mowing it too early than any other single cause except for drought.

Germination times of grass seed	
Turf species	Expected germination time (days) *
Annual ryegrass	5 - 10
Bermudagrass (Seeded)	10 - 30
Buffalograss	14 - 30
Colonial bentgrass	10 - 14
Creeping bentgrass	10 - 14
Hard fescue	7 - 14
Kentucky bluegrass	14 - 30
Perennial ryegrass	5 - 10
Red fescue	7 - 14
Rough bluegrass	7 - 10
Tall fescue	7 - 12
* The warmer the weather the faster the rate of germination. The longest periods are for average daytime temperatures of 50 to 65F, the shortest are for average daytime temperatures of 78 to 85F.	

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWLY SODDED LAWNS

Just as with newly seeded lawns, over or under-watering a newly sodded area will dramatically affect the establishment (success) of the grass.. Ideally the newly sodded lawn should be lightly watered twice a day every day for at least two weeks. Note: heavy watering could drown the new sod. Then after that two week period a gentle but somewhat heavier watering every two to three days for the next two weeks. Note if it rains more than a 1/4" of an inch you may skip that day in your calculation as to when to water next. After that period a single moderate watering per week is all that should be necessary, unless this is in the hottest part of summer (July through August when you should always use a 3 to 4 day schedule unless we have significant rains (1 " or more) that week. Remember the lack of applying adequate water is considered neglect.

Mowing, unlike for seeded lawns, is not a problem, and you may resume your normal mowing practices taking into account the suggestion below.

Mowing Heights

To minimize the growth of noxious weeds in your lawn, you need to deny the seeds of weeds what they need most; sunshine! The easiest way to accomplish this is to let your grass grow tall enough to shade (block-out from the sun) the weed seeds lying under the grass. Without strong sunlight most weed seeds can't germinate or survive long enough to produce roots. So set your mower at its *highest* setting. If you are concerned about winter mold you can start to lower the mowing height in late October lowering it for each subsequent mowing through to the last mowing which in our area usually takes place in late November or early December. In Spring, with your first mowing, re-set your Mower to its highest setting.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE TO REMEMBER REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE A NEWLY SEEDED OR SODDED LAWN IS:

Should we have a dry October and November, water the yard and beds DEEPLY AND THOROUGHLY in early December before the ground freezes. Dry soils do not retain heat. Moist soils do. If the soil in the winter is dry the temperatures can drop to below 28 degrees F, at 27 degrees F roots of plants begin to die!!! Even when air temperatures hover around 0 degrees F or even dip below 0, the ground, if moist, will rarely drop below 28 degrees F; often staying at 30 degrees F or higher! MAKE SURE YOUR LAWN AND BEDS GO INTO WINTER WITH MOIST (NOT FLOODED) SOILS.

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE ABOVE ALSO APPLIES TO YOUR TREES AND SHRUBS!

If you have any questions feel free to call me at 443 812 2760.

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