

Seeding Spring Lawns

Many of us have now learned that sowing lawn seed is best done in the fall of the year in our area. After talking to people, I have come to realize that for many different reasons this cannot always take place. This is the procedure I wanted to talk about now, if you find yourself needing to sow seed in the Spring of the year.

First of all, the ideal time is between mid-March and mid-April. Prepare the soil as best as possible with a core aerator or drum roller with spikes. Sow seed at a rate of 4 pounds per 1000 sq feet for over-seeding and slightly heavier on bare soil. This is the time when a true starter fertilizer will be very beneficial to give much needed root growth. Keep soil lightly moist until germination occurs, then less frequent watering over the following weeks is OK.

One of the biggest issues with sowing new seed in the spring is trying to prevent crabgrass from overtaking your newly planted lawn. Traditional crabgrass preventer cannot be applied, as it will prevent the germination of newly planted lawn seed as well. There are 2 options for you: first, sow your new lawn seed, and wait to apply your crabgrass preventer to the lawn *after* the second mowing of your new grass. This will help insure that your lawn is strong enough to endure the weed control. Your second option is to put down the crabgrass preventer and wait to sow your seed after 90 days of weed prevention. Products like *Dimension* have a lifespan of 90 days in the lawn, so you would want to wait after this time period in order to sow new seed. This may put you too far into the summer season for successful sowing, so we recommend the first option if both products need to be put down.

After your new lawn has been mowed 2-3 times, time to think about that broadleaf weed control. Weed control is necessary in mid-May to control summer annuals that likely germinated in mid-April. Remember – give crabgrass an inch and it will take a yard! There is a newer product on the market now called Crab-E-Rad that targets crabgrass specifically and can be sprayed hose-end or in a pump up sprayer over your existing lawn. We've seen great results from this product so far. Enjoy the garden! (without the weeds!)

Mark