

Seeding a New Lawn

The best time to sow grass seed is in the spring or late summer/early fall. The seeds will germinate quickly in the warm soil, warm days, and cool nights.

The first step in planting a new lawn is the establishment of the rough grade. Remove debris, fill in low spots, and level off high areas. The grade should slope away from the foundation of the house, drive, and sidewalks. The grade should be done well in advance of seeding to allow settling to occur. Also, remove any weeds that are growing in that area.

At least 4 to 6 inches of good soil are needed to establish a lawn. Using a shovel or rototiller, loosen up the soil, removing stones and weeds as you work. Bumper Crop, Leaf Gro, or other organic material should be mixed into the top 6 inches of the soil. Check the soil pH with a soil test, if necessary. Add 50 to 70 pounds of ground limestone per 1,000 square feet, and fertilizer at this time, and till it into the soil. The final step is hand raking the area to level it out.

Select a high quality grass seed best suited for the exposure of the site. Spread the seed uniformly with a rotary or drop spreader, or by hand. Apply half the seed in one direction and the other half moving at right angles to the first pass. Lightly cover the seed with a thin layer of Bumper Crop or new straw. The Bumper Crop will provide additional nutrients for the seed. Do not bury the seed, as it needs the sun to grow. Roll the soil lightly to firm the surface and provide good seed-to-soil contact.

The most important step is watering. The surface soil should be kept moist from the time of seeding until several weeks after the seed has germinated. Lightly water the seedbed in the morning and in the evening. If you create puddles, you are watering too heavily. As the seed develops, reduce the frequency of your watering, but increase the depth until the grass has reached maturity.

Mow new grass when the leaf height is 1/3 taller than the desired height. Do not mow the grass too short. Grasses such as tall fescue, fine fescue, and Kentucky bluegrass should be mowed no lower than 2 inches (preferably 2.5 to 3 inches). Low mowing allows weeds to get a foothold in a young grass stand. Regular mowing will help thicken the turf.

Johnson's carries a fine selection of sun or shade grass seed, fertilizers, lime, Bumper Crop, Leaf Gro, spreaders, and rakes - everything necessary to help you install a new lawn.



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