

Over-seeding Older Lawns

Over-seeding is a great way to improve the overall quality and performance of older lawns. It is an important part of the overall maintenance program to over-seed, typically once a year for fescue and perennial ryegrass lawns and every 2 to 3 years for Kentucky Bluegrass lawns.

Improved plant selection and breeding with the new cultivars of today compared with those even five years ago have shown:

- Increased disease resistance
- Improved wear tolerance
- Insect resistance for fescues and ryes
- Increased drought and heat tolerances
- Greater levels of chlorophyll for increased plant health and performance
- Better spring green-up and summer time color

Periods of prolonged drought or hot humid weather can wipe out older, more vulnerable lawns in nothing flat. So considering a cultivar “upgrade” will ensure that you have the latest in plant breeding and selection working for you when stressful situations occur, and they will.

Asking your lawn care professional or seed supplier on exactly what cultivars will perform best for your situation is the first step in giving your lawn the quality makeover that it needs. You are also encouraged to do your own research on the very latest cultivars by visiting the website of the National Turf Evaluation Program, (www.ntep.org). The site will guide you through scores of turf trials held across the nation. Just find a trial site that is near to where you live for a better match of climate.

Introducing new cultivars into your older lawn can be a very easy process. Over-seeding after aerating your lawn is a very effective method. Getting the seeds into the soil where moisture lies is the key. A lack of moisture is most common reason for seedling failure. By keeping the ground moist for at least 4 to 6 weeks will give those young seedlings every chance to get rooted and mature on through winter.

Does your lawn have thatch in excess of ½ inch? If yes, then power raking to eliminate the excess thatch will decrease incidence of disease and will discourage insect infestation. Power raking as much thatch as possible will also allow the seed to make greater contact with the soil. If the seed is caught in the thatch layer, it will dry out and not germinate because of the lack of moisture.

Over-seeding is an effective way to improve your lawns overall quality and performance. By selecting blends or mixes that are very low in “other crop” and “weed seed” is a well worth the money. Buying “discount” seed up front will only result in a weedy and under -performing lawn. Also, buy your seed from a reputable supplier that can supply you with purity content test results in less than 24 hours to ensure you are getting your money’s worth. When it comes to seed, you definitely get what you pay for.

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