Overseeding

It's like a makeover for your lawn!

Overseeding is one of the most important tasks involved in maintaining a healthy, lush lawn. Overseeding can be time-consuming if you have a large lawn, but it is not difficult, and the results are well worth the effort.

Things You'll Need

- Lawn Mower
- Rake
- Aerator or Slice Seeder
- Soil Test
- Lime
- Starter Fertilizer 18-24-12
- Fescue/Rye/Bluegrass Grass Seed
- Seed Spreader
- Garden Hose/Sprinkler System

Part One: Dethatching and Loosening

1) The best time to overseed is during September. If you can't overseed in September, overseed in early spring.

2) Mow your existing lawn. Mow your lawn down to a height of 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches in order to minimize competition from grasses and weeds already established in your lawn. Mowing the lawn short will also help keep grass seeds from getting trapped in tall grass and will allow more sunlight to reach the new seedlings. Remove all grass clippings.

3) Loosen the soil using the most appropriate method based on the compactness of your soil. Options for loosening the soil include dethatching, aerating, or heavy raking.

4) Dethatch lawn areas that you plan to seed. Thatch is a layer of mostly dead organic matter on the top of the soil. A heavy layer of thatch will keep seeds from germinating, as seeds need to be in direct contact with the soil in order to germinate. Use a rake to pull the thatch out of the lawn.

5) Aerate your lawn to loosen up the soil and reduce the soil compaction. This will allow the lawn to breathe and give the seed a place to set into the soil for ideal germination. Pro-Turf can typically aerate your lawn in the month of September. Contact us for availability.

Part Two: Prepping the Soil

1) If time allows, conduct a soil test to determine the pH of your soil (optional). The ideal pH level is between 6.0 and 6.8. If you don't know how to perform a pH test, Pro-Turf offers this service. It takes 3-6 weeks for the results to be returned with a complete analysis.

2) Apply lime to your lawn (optional). Lime will help balance out the pH, if necessary. Carefully follow the instructions on the packaging to determine the amount of lime needed based on the pH and the size of your lawn.

Part Three: Spreading and Nurturing the Seed

1) Spread grass seed evenly over the entire lawn. Use the amount specified on the seed packaging, based on the size of your lawn. To seed, you can either use a rotary spreader, a drop spreader, a hand spreader, or spread by hand.

   Make sure you choose a variety of seed that blends nicely with your existing lawn. The ideal mix for New England is a mix of fescue, rye, and Kentucky bluegrass.

2) Lightly rake the newly seeded area to help the seeds settle on the soil. Remember that any seeds that do not come into direct contact with the soil will not germinate.

3) Apply a starter fertilizer. Make sure you use a fertilizer that is appropriate for your specific lawn conditions, as indicated by the soil sample results.

4) Water the lawn completely immediately after overseeding. Continue to water the lawn frequently, 2-3 times daily for at least the first several weeks to ensure proper germination. Once the grass seed is firmly established, water the lawn for longer periods less frequently.

5) Apply another application of starter fertilizer 4 weeks after overseeding.

6) Mow the lawn once it reaches 3 inches, or after about a month. Continue to mow the lawn to a height of 3 inches for the remainder of the season.

7) Be sure to apply a winterizer fertilizer to your lawn in November. This will help the lawn green up early in the spring.

Other Tips

- Core aeration increases contact between seeds and soil, improving germination and helping establish the new grass more quickly.
- Using a slice seeder helps loosen the soil by creating vertical grooves that also increase seed to soil contact. When using a slice seeder, make 2 to 3 passes in different directions to create a cross-hatch pattern for better coverage.
- Keep people and pets away from the newly seeded lawn until the new grass is growing, about 4 weeks.
- Once grass seed has been spread and moistened, do not let it dry out. The new seed must be kept moist until the seeds have germinated.

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