

Planting Seed

Always plant on fresh disturbed soil

Establish a firm seedbed

Don't plant too deep

Develop a root system

One of the most common mistakes when planting is not planting the seed into **freshly disturbed soil**. There have been several field plantings that farmers would begin planting and be rained out before finishing. Some would go back into the field and continue planting without disturbing the un-sown part of the field. The part of the field that was not disturbed after the rain would never have the stand that the freshly disturbed seedbed would have. The only exception to this is when the seed is planted with a no-till grass drill.

The second problem that occurs when planting small seed is having a **firm seedbed**. When most fields are plowed, air pockets are placed in the soil by the plow. During limited rainfall times, these pockets can allow the seed to germinate and then die when the roots grow into air pockets. With adequate moisture, the "raindrop splash" effect will firm the seedbed where there aren't any air pockets. Through years of planting it has been found that a seedbed can never be too firm. In fact, the firmer the seedbed, the better the stand. Some people will firm the seedbed by rolling it before planting the seed. Others will plant the seed then roll the seedbed. Both ways work in establishing a crop. We feel that rolling the seedbed before planting is more important than after and rolling before and after is best.

The third problem in planting is the depth in which the seed is planted. The old timers had a saying that seven times the diameter of the seed is the maximum depth that any seed should be planted. The state of Oklahoma did a study, and found out that up to fifty percent of the wheat seed planted in Oklahoma never came up because it was **planted too deep**. Considering the size of wheat in comparison to grass and flower seed makes depth of planting critical to success. If a grass seeder with disk openers is used, then make sure that each disk has a depth band on it to insure proper depth placement. If the seed is broadcasted, firming the seedbed by rolling it will insure that the seed is not placed too deep.

The fourth problem in planting seed is the amount of time that the stand needs to establish itself. The Government recommends one full growing season before grazing. This is a wise management practice. Perennials, unlike annuals, need to establish a root system before being grazed. Few stands, if any, have ever died during the winter of the first year if they were allowed to **develop their root system**. Several stands have been wiped out by grazing or haying the first season due to lack of root development.

