

Successful Grass Seed Planting



Planting grass seed is an easy way to either fill in an existing lawn or to grow a new lawn entirely. While some may think you just throw out some grass seed and water, the soil preparation is just as important as the seed you use.

Preparing the Seed Bed

The best times to plant grass seed are mid to late spring, as well as late summer and early fall. Before starting grass seed, the planting area must be free of weeds. Digging out weeds to remove as many roots as possible may be necessary. Next, till the area to a depth of about 4 inches. Smooth out the area with a rake, removing rocks and clumps as needed.

Applying a starter fertilizer will aid the grass in producing stronger roots and leaf blades during the early stages of growth. *Fertilome Lawn Starter* is a great fertilizer to incorporate into the seedbed before grass seed has been spread. Lightly rake the fertilizer into the soil after applying.

Seed Selection

Selecting the appropriate seed for your lawn should not be taken lightly. Homeowners will typically choose to plant cool-season grass in this area of South Dakota. In most cases, planting a mix of grass seed varieties will always be a preferred route. Typically, multiple varieties of bluegrass, perennial rye, and fine fescue are the best mixes to introduce to your lawn. Take special care in selecting varieties if you have a dense shade area in your lawn, as those areas may require a different grass seed.



Planting Grass Seed

Grass seed can be spread by hand (if very small jobs), drop spreader, or for very large jobs, a drill may be beneficial. Follow directions for how many pounds should be applied per 1000 square feet. It is best to spread half of the seed in one direction and the other half in the opposite direction. Rake the entire area lightly to incorporate the seed into the top thin layer of soil. Spreading weed-free straw over the top of the seedbed can help minimize erosion if planted on a slope and can help retain moisture.

The seedbed should remain constantly wet during the germination process. Lawn sprinklers can be helpful for this. Watering the area several times a day for short periods of time will be needed, especially on sunny and windy days. Some grass seed may take 10-14 days or longer to germinate, so do not stop watering too soon. As seed has germinated, watering can be decreased; however, watering to keep the soil moist will still be needed. Grass will continue to thicken after you mow. After 3 mowing's, weed chemical applications can be made as well as the second fertilizer application.