

Great lawns are grown every year by novice homeowners and professional gardeners alike. Growing a great lawn is rewarding and adds beauty and curb appeal to your home. The ideal time to seed is in the fall (mid-August through mid-September) with spring and summer being slightly less favorable. Seeding your lawn is not difficult and the rewards pay off in hundreds of dollars saved by doing the work yourself! Here are some guidelines for getting started and getting the most for your money!

## **SOIL PREPARATION:**

1. A minimum of 4" of good topsoil is recommended to prevent drying out and to maintain a good turf.
2. The topsoil should be mixed/rototilled with subsoil as layering of soil often prevents root penetration by grasses.
3. A pH of 6.5 is ideal: check the soil yourself or bring in a sample to Flowerland. Acid soils (pH below 7) encourage disease while limy-sweet soils (pH above 7) encourage weeds. If pH needs adjusting, add the proper chemicals and mix with soil before seeding.
4. It is also advisable to check the soil for nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash levels. As phosphorus moves down into the soil very slowly, it is best if this is done before the soil is mixed. If no special needs are indicated by testing, then use a starter-type fertilizer (one higher in phosphorus) for root development like a 5-10-10, Scott's Starter Fertilizer, Max Lawn Starter Fertilizer or GreenView Starter Fertilizer. Apply these the same day as seeding. Do not put seed and fertilizer into spreader at the same time. Follow Instructions of fertilizer for application rates.
5. Level the soil by raking or dragging. Best soil structure will be lumpy (from pea size to golf ball!); seeds fall under lumps and are "planted". Work only with soils dry enough that they crumble in your hands. Well prepared soil leaves a footprint less than 1/4" deep.
6. Seed the same day that soil is prepared lest a rain "melt" the soil back into a hardened, non-usable seedbed surface.
7. After seed and fertilizer are scattered on lumpy soil surface, rake lightly to help get seeds under lumps.
8. Rolling of planted seed bed is also very helpful.
9. After the seed is planted, the soil should never be let to dry out. On windy days, watering may have to be done at noon and again in late afternoon. Since the seed is shallow, sprinkle for only 5-10 minutes-avoid puddles of water.
10. Straw can be used at the rate of about 1 bale per 1,000 sq. ft. for areas that are exposed to stress like slopes, south facing banks, etc. Straw is also helpful if your lifestyle makes it difficult to water at mid-day as soil dries out. Other than for these reasons, straw is probably not needed. Remove about two-thirds of straw when grass is 1-2" high; the rest will decay. Add a little extra nitrogen to help straw decay and keep grass green.

## **AREA CALCULATION:**

1. Knowing the dimensions of the lot is helpful or measure the areas to be seeded.
2. For a lot 100 x 95, the area is 100 x 95=9,500 sq. ft.(dividing by 9 gives about 1,056 sq. yards.) The house might be 24 x 60=1440 sq. ft. Then the total lawn area is about 9,500 - 1440=8,060 sq. ft. Maybe the real area is closer to 7,500 sq. ft. due to walkways, drives, gardens, etc. If you have the dimensions, we can help you with the calculations.
3. With an idea of the area, seed, fertilizer, lime, straw, etc. can be purchased with some degree of accuracy.

## **SEED SELECTION:**

1. Mixtures (bluegrass & fescue, etc.) are always better than blends (bluegrass A & bluegrass B, etc.); problems from disease, insect and stress will be less.
2. Basic lawn mixes (sun or shade) require about 1 lb. per 250 sq. ft. for good coverage.
3. An average lawn (about 10,000 sq. ft.) needs about 40lbs. of high quality seed; see Information in our seed sales area.
4. It is best to use seed same year as purchased since seed rapidly loses its germination quality with time.
5. It is also best to set seed spreader opening very small and crisscross area several times to insure good coverage without running out of seed.
6. Always assume the seed-lawn you are establishing is the permanent one; never plant a "temporary" lawn.
7. Flowerland provides free spreader use with seed or fertilizer purchase.
8. Seed for sunny, shade or play areas are available at Flowerland either prepackaged, in bulk or in large bags (25, 40 lbs, etc.)
9. Mow when grass is over 2" tall; best to mow more frequently to prevent large buildup of clippings.

