



Gardeners Helping Gardeners Succeed

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Steps to Establishing Your New Lawn from Seed

Step 1

Establishing a new lawn requires a well-shaped, contoured, level, firm seed bed. Till 1 yard of *Bumper Crop* or *Full Circle Boost* for every 300 square feet. An irrigation system should already be installed. Leveling can be accomplished by 'floating' the lawn area with a landscape rake. Add moisture to settle the soft spots and drag the lawn area again. Fertilize the area to be planted with *Master Nursery Master Start Fertilizer*. Spread fertilizer in two directions to avoid streaking in the new lawn. Apply 5 pounds per 250 square feet. Cultivate into the top 4" of soil.

Step 2

Disturbing the soil brings weed seeds to the surface that can germinate even after being buried for many years. Wait for a few days after final leveling to allow weed seeds to germinate and show green color, although it is not always necessary to wait for weed sprout. After weeds show, spray newly sprouted weeds with an herbicide or mechanically remove them. Spraying with an herbicide, such as *Roundup*, should be done with care. Follow the label directions.

Step 3

Seed your new lawn with a grass seed mixture at the rate of 7 to 10 pounds per 1000 square feet (20 feet by 50 feet). Divide the grass seed into equal amounts and seed from two directions, preferably with a drop seed spreader. Rake the seed and fertilizer into the seed bed using light strokes with a bamboo or spring-toothed rake.

Step 4

Mulching is a good practice, especially during high temperature months, and will help retain moisture. Use 1 yard of steer manure or *Full Circle Boost*, as a top dress, per 1000 square feet.

Step 5

Rolling increases capillary action in the soil which brings up and holds moisture in the rooting zone. Rent a water roller, fill half full and pull behind you to press the material to the soil.

Step 6

Keep your new turf moist until five days after it has sprouted, **watering several times a day so the top of the ground stays moist but does not make the yard soggy**. Germination time for new seedlings depends on the species of grass planted. As a rule of thumb, bluegrass requires 2 to 3 weeks; fine fescues 7 to 10 days; and dwarf tall fescues 7 to 10 days. After about ten days, watch for any weedy grasses. They will be taller than the seeded grasses and should be removed by digging the entire root. Weedy grasses come from seeds in the soil, for the most part, not from the seed you have just planted. Broadleaf weeds will need to be hand removed or sprayed after the third mowing.

Step 7

Continue to reduce the frequency of waterings and increase the length of watering by the decreased time so you are watering about every other day in 4 weeks' time. Mowing the new lawn should begin when the grass is 1 1/2" to 3" tall. The preferred mowing height is 2" to 3" for dwarf tall fescues, bluegrass and fine fescue. Once your new lawn is established **maintain a regular fertilizer program** to ensure a dark green healthy turf.