

ELITE

LANDSCAPE LAWN BLEND

Lawn Seeding Guide

Preparation. After installing your sprinkler system, preparing the area for seeding is the next step to creating a beautiful lawn. To ensure the soil can best support a healthy lawn, you may wish to call your local County Extension Agent regarding any appropriate amendments—such as topsoil, manure or sand—for the soils in your area. Amending the soil before seeding can be especially important around new homes, as the exposed soil from new construction is often very poor quality.

Site Prep

1. Remove existing vegetation and weeds from the area that is to be your new lawn. Removal can be done by hand or by applying a non-selective herbicide such as Roundup. Always apply herbicides following the directions on the product label and only when weeds are green and actively growing.
2. After applying the non-selective herbicide, wait the number of days indicated on the product label and then till the site to a depth of 4 to 6 inches.

Add Amendments

1. Evenly distribute soil amendments and till them in to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Incorporating the amendments into the soil, rather than just spreading them out on top, will help to prevent potential future problems of root restriction and poor water infiltration.

Final Grading

1. For proper drainage, create a minimum of a 5% slope **away** from any house or foundational structure (5% slope = 6 inch drop for every 10 feet of distance). This slope should continue for a minimum of 10 feet from the house foundation.
2. Remove remaining debris and rocks larger than a golf ball and rake the site smooth.
3. If you are able to leave a footprint in the soil more than 1 inch deep, your seedbed is too soft. A lawn roller may be required to firm the seedbed before applying seed. Fill the roller half full of water and roll it across the site until the soil is compacted according to the 1 inch rule. This creates the final surface for your new lawn, so take the time to do it properly.

Application. The ideal time to seed your lawn is when daytime air temperatures have been at or above 70°F for at least 2 weeks, raising soil temperatures up around 50°F.

Starter Fertilizer (Optional)

1. Using a fertilizer spreader, apply starter fertilizer to the soil surface per the manufacturer's recommendations. It is important that you use a **starter** fertilizer, rather than a product labeled for use on an established lawn. Starter fertilizers are high in phosphorus and low in nitrogen, according to what seedlings need during their first month of establishment. The opposite is true for established lawns.

Applying Seed

1. Adjust your drop or rotary seed spreader to half the seeding rate for your seed blend. Refer to the instructions in owner's manual.
2. Apply the seed in two directions to ensure uniform coverage. Apply half of the seed walking a north-south direction, and the remaining half walking an east-west direction. This will reduce the occurrence of bare spots.
3. After seed has been applied, **lightly** rake the soil to improve seed-to-soil contact. Seeds buried much deeper than their own length will have a hard time germinating successfully.
4. **Keep people and pets off the site until the lawn has established and thickened.**

Watering. Proper irrigation is key to the success of a new seeding. It is important to keep the seed moist at all times, but not flooded, throughout the germination and establishment process. Until seedlings have developed a significant root depth, they are especially vulnerable to drying out.

Sprinklers

1. Water immediately after seed application and again as needed to keep the soil surface moist at all times until seedlings are fully established.
2. During establishment, set the sprinklers to water frequently in short bursts in order to saturate only the top 3-4 inches of soil and to prevent the seed from drying out. Long deep periods of watering are unnecessary at this time. If puddling occurs on the soil surface, you are likely overwatering and need to reduce either the frequency or length of your watering schedule.
3. As the seedlings begin to deepen their roots, reduce how often you are watering and increase the time of each watering. This deeper watering will train the roots to go deeper into the soil. However, only reduce the number of waterings when you are confident that all of the seed has germinated and established.

Maintenance. Regular lawn maintenance, including fertilization, mowing and weed control will keep your yard beautiful for the life of the lawn.

1. Mow your new lawn for the first time after the grass is 2 to 3 inches tall.
2. If necessary, use a broadleaf herbicide after the 2nd mowing to remove weeds such as dandelions. Roundup is **not** a broadleaf herbicide and will kill your new lawn. Consult your local lawn and garden professionals with more specific herbicide questions.
3. Weeds may also be pulled by hand, but wait until your seedlings are big enough so that you don't accidentally uproot them. Also, many annual weeds that appear during the establishment period of your new lawn will disappear under the stress of a regular mowing schedule.
4. After the 3rd mowing, apply a balanced fertilizer to invigorate the new lawn and water the area thoroughly. As with herbicides, whenever applying fertilizer follow the instructions on the packaging.

Future Maintenance. In the years after establishing your new lawn, keep in mind the need for regular annual aeration and possibly an occasional dethatching. Aeration and dethatching (using a thatching rake or a mechanical power rake) will keep your lawn thick and lush and reduce problems caused by pests and disease.