

Establishment and Care of Seeded Lawns

There are two main requirements needed for grass seed to germinate properly: Good soil preparation and proper watering.

Grass seed can be grown in just about any type of soil provided there are adequate amounts of nutrients and water and the soil is well aerated. Since many soils are primarily clay, the addition of organic material such as sphagnum peat moss or mushroom compost will improve both aeration and water holding capacity aiding germination and growth. Pulverized topsoil should be added to adjust the grade and to fill in low areas.

Grass seed can be applied to the worked soil either by hand or with a hand spreader. After the seed has been put down, the area may be lightly raked to incorporate the seed into the soil surface.

A good slow release fertilizer should be applied to the seeded area. Although it will not speed up the actual germination, it does help the newly emerged seedlings develop a strong root system more quickly.

Once the grass seed has been planted, it is very important to keep it moist. Light watering two or three times a day for the first three to four weeks should be adequate. Watering should be done for 15 to 30 minutes each watering depending on how hot or windy it is. The frequency of watering is the secret of successful seed development.

The new grass should receive its first cutting once the foliage has grown 50% higher than the desired height after mowing. For example, if the grass height is to 2 ½ inches, the cutting should be done when the height of the grass reaches 5 inches.