

SEEDING TECHNIQUE & MAINTENANCE



The Art & the Science of Seeding

At first glance, seeding may appear to be more cost-effective than sodding, but in reality, seeding requires more “inputs” and requires more time from the homeowner. *To ensure the greatest chances of a successful seeding, it is important to have a proper understanding of the work and maintenance involved.* The tips in this handout will help increase your chance for success. **If you use top quality products and you aren’t afraid of some elbow grease, (and if Mother Nature plays nicely too) seeding can result in a beautiful lawn.**

First, buy quality seed. At Blue Grass we sell top sod quality seed that has been subjected to rigorous university and impartial third party research. From this research, we select elite cultivars that have been bred for disease and insect resistance, drought, wear and shade tolerance, slow growth rate (for less mowing), and uniformity in color and texture. Additionally, the seed we sell at Blue Grass has passed the strictest weed seed regulations in the country. Fewer weed seeds means fewer problems for you in the early stages of your lawn’s life!

Note: If you are simply trying to “fill in your existing lawn”, do a soil sample and feed your existing lawn first. Iowa is literally the grasslands of the nation, if grasses are underperforming in an Iowa lawn it is almost always due to lack of nutrients. Poor nutrient availability in your soil means seed is going to underperform too. It is also important to keep in mind that it can be difficult to match grass types to established lawns and if you don’t want a “patchwork” look in your yard, it is better to work with what you already have!

Timing in IA	Notes
Mid August to Mid September	The ideal time to seed due to soil and typical weather conditions.
Late April to Late May	The 2nd best time to seed. Note: some seeds take up to 3 weeks to germinate and heavy spring rains could wash away your seed.
Late Fall	Also known as a “dormant seeding”. This is the riskiest time to seed due to weather and soil conditions.



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LAWN MAINTENANCE

Product(s)	Description
Master Blend	Matches the sod grown at Blue Grass Enterprises. 100% elite Kentucky bluegrass cultivars selected from university research. Dark green, lush and low growing saving you time and money while providing years of enjoyment. In addition to aesthetic appeal, this seed/sod mix is selected characteristics like disease and insect resistance, drought, wear and shade tolerance, growth rate (for less mowing) and color qualities. The result is a naturally dark green, thick and luxurious lawn. Ideal for home lawns, public projects, sports fields and golf courses, Master Blend is the best of the best. Rate: 3.5#/1,000 sq/ft
Nu Lawn	50% Kentucky Bluegrass (elite cultivars), 30% Perennial Ryegrass, 20% Creeping Fescue - Great if you're looking for a top-quality, faster germinating, hardy seeded area. Rate: 4.5#/1,000 sq/ft
Dense Shade	25% Kentucky Bluegrass, 25% Chewing Fescue, 25% Creeping Red Fescue, 25% Hard Fescue - Designed for areas that receives scarce amounts of sun. Works best in well drained soil with moderate fertility. Rate: 6#/1,000 sq/ft

THE FOUR KEYS TO SEEDING SUCCESS

1. SEED TO SOIL CONTACT

Soil should be worked up to a depth of three to four inches. This can be achieved by rototilling to reduce any clodding. If the soil is already prepared, rake to level the area and remove any rocks. Grass seed can be spread with the same equipment used to spread fertilizer, or by hand for small areas. Regardless of the method the seed should be divided into two lots. Spread the second lot at right angles to the first. To ensure good seed to soil contact the areas should be lightly raked, raking too hard will redistribute the seed and also plant it too deep. The average depth should be between 1/8 to 1/4 inch. Once this has been completed the area should be rolled to ensure good soil contact.

2. ADEQUATE SOIL MOISTURE

Hopefully, Mother Nature will aid you in keeping the seedbed moist. However, you should be prepared to help. Improper watering is probably the biggest factor that causes new lawns to fail. For seeds to properly germinate evenly, the top layer of the soil must not be allowed to dry out. After planting, saturate the lawn to *almost* puddling. After this point light and frequent sprinklings will be needed, the surface must not be allowed to dry out until the lawn is well established. If it is extremely warm or windy, more frequent waterings will be needed. Once the lawn is long enough to mow, reduce your watering to once a week.

3. ADEQUATE SOIL TEMPERATURES

Most cool season grasses germinate when the SOIL TEMPERATURES reach about 50 degrees. In Iowa this typically happens around May. Any seeding done prior to soil temperatures of 50 degrees will lay dormant until they reach this point. Generally for fall seeding, seed no later than September 30 to ensure fall germination. Or not before November 15 for a dormant seeding, the dormant seeding will lay idle until soil temperatures are consistent with germinating at the first available time frame that following spring.

4. ADEQUATE SOIL NUTRIENTS

The grass seed itself has enough "food" or nutrients to germinate and send out a root. However, the reason the seed has sent out a root is in search of food, so it is important to maintain an adequate supply of nutrients at all times. Use a STARTER fertilizer when seeding. A starter fertilizer contains phosphorus which is a critical nutrient for plant development. Starter fertilizers are typically entirely consumed within about three weeks, so you may need to feed the area multiple times until full establishment has occurred. Once established begin a regular scheduled fertility program and enjoy the benefits of a healthy lawn.