

Lawn Recovery



When a new lawn is not practical, or affordable, it may be possible to recover some or all of an existing lawn by

- **REVIVING**
- **PATCH REPAIR**
- **RESEEDING**



About The Author



Through my many years, I have perfected my gardening skills and expanded my knowledge and experience as a gardening instructor, speaker, author, certified nursery consultant, and most recently blogger.

I was introduced to gardening at the very early age of 8. I lived across the street from a man who gardened his little slice of heaven on about 5 acres of semi-rural property in No. California. Mr. May had everything from honeybees to an orchard, and was very accommodating to the little boy from across the street. I spent hours shadowing Mr. May around his place, asking questions, making mental notes and scurrying across the street to try my hand in my parent's anemic yard. Eventually I got so good at applying Mr. May's know-how that I won the consent of my Mother to tend her flower beds; and my Dad gave me a vegetable garden plot in the corner of our backyard. I didn't know then that I was attracted to the science of the whole thing, but I could see the results and was very proud of the increase in blooms for my Mom, and the vegetable production that even I could appreciate as abundant. I was hooked.

High school and college left little time or opportunity to get in the dirt. But, I was rewarded and further encouraged by my zoology and botany classes and next tried my hand at tending a garden underneath the high porch and stairs of our apartment in No. New Jersey. It all came back to me and when we finally had our first home I had my first garden plot as an adult. Some early setbacks and a hankering to be more at-one with the earth, led me to the disciplines and sacrifices of French Bio-Intensive Organic Gardening. Yeah, I wore wing tips to work, but I had Berkenstocks in my heart as a young man in the late 70s.

Today, I live on a "rock" in Rocklin, CA and my active gardening is restricted to raised beds (even my lawn is a raised bed) and patio containers. But, I do keep up with the latest trends in gardening, the irreversible encroachment of the Government on our garden culture; and most importantly, those new to the pleasures of gardening. As a nursery consultant in the Garden Center of the world's leading home improvement store chain, I have even gained a faithful following of young adults with first home responsibilities and opportunities: and retired men and women who now have the time, focus, and inclination to finally develop a better understanding of gardening and hopes for its rewards.

Nearly every backyard patio has a charcoal or gas grill. My most recent experience in backyard cooking has been the introduction of the **Traeger Smoker / Grill** into the lives of myself and my wife Roberta. In the pages that follow we will share with you the wonders and rewards of cooking with wood . . .at home on our Patio !



Lawns

Recovery and Renovation

Has Your Lawn Lost Its Love ?

“My lawn(s) isn't Keeping Up With The Jones !” This is a common complaint from followers who have a lawn that has a yellow tinge, looks brown and lifeless, or harbors dead spots that may be expanding.

The easy answers are:

1) Undernourished. Lawn has NOT been feed is some time.

2) Damaged, or Infested due to:

A. Conditions (sun / moisture)

B. Insects

C. Diseases

D. Poor Maintenance



**Rust and Moss
Two Very Common
Lawn Aliments**

3) Grass that has lost the battle for survival due to insects, litter, insufficient irrigation, or over watering.

All of these maladies can be addressed with a little basic knowledge and dedication to caring for your lawn with regularly.

If you have had your lawn(s) for sometime and it doesn't look as good as your neighbor's . . . you can likely be rewarded for efforts to improve your lawn's health.

If you have inherited a derelict lawn(s), the sooner you get a handle on what you have to work with, and how best to achieve its recovery, the better.

First, let's talk about **FERTILIZING YOUR LAWN . . .**

Lawn Recovery

Reviving An Existing Lawn

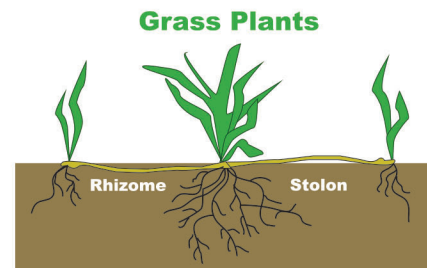
Some lawns can be revived with little or no extra effort.



If you have enough individual grass plants surviving in your lawn it's possible to encourage new grass plants from existing grass plant roots.

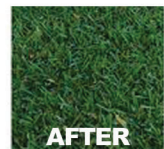
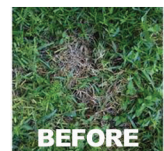
REVIVE® Can Resurrect Your Lawn

If there are healthy rhizomes and stolons spreading out from enough healthy grass plants, the application of REVIVE® has the potential to encourage these root members to sprout new grass plants **without reseeding or overseeding**. Eventually, REVIVE® this can thicken many distressed lawns.



If there is a miracle among lawn restorations, it is the amazing recovery potential from this incredible product.

I discovered this product when I went searching for a remedy to heal the severe dog urine burns in my lawn (see photo at left). I administered revive over my entire lawn, once a month for six months. As you can see the burns that were the size of watermelons are completely healed. During this period I fertilized the lawn twice with Vigoro Lawn Fertilizer. This combination, in addition to resurrecting my lawn, made my lawn so green and thick I have maintained a regime with both products for nearly two years.



REVIVE®

Once EVERY month.



VIGORO®

Once Every TWO months.

Lawn Recovery

Patching Packages



Lawns can have patchy bald spots from drying out, heavy traffic, intense play areas, or any combination resulting in dry, compacted soil.

The All In One Package Approach

There are no silver bullets for patching bald spots ! There are some measures you can take short of putting in a whole new lawn. The easiest, although the most expensive per sq. ft., is a combination planting product. These products are formulated to contain grass seed, starter fertilizer and a compost seed cover combined in one package.

The bald area is raked of debris, moistened, and tilled slightly. The material is applied out of the package to a prescribed depth of coverage, compacted, and thoroughly watered.

These are products of convenience, and best utilized when the greater investment in separate packages of seed, fertilizer, and compost are not warranted.

There is NO margin for error when it comes to tender grass seedlings.



Take extra care to be certain they NEVER dry out !



Pennington
**ONE STEP
COMPLETE®**



Scotts
**EZ
SEED®**

Lawn Recovery

**Reseeding
Renovations**
... Continued .

Roll The Top Cover

Rolling the Top Cover will form a tight (no air) seedbed around the grass seed to encourage healthy germination. This compacted cover will also add protection from birds who might otherwise find and eat the seeds. If you do not have a roller available, then a board or even a light tamping with your foot can make some compaction possible.



WATER WATER WATER

Water and atmospheric warmth are what trigger the germination of grass seed. Nothing in this world is more tender and vulnerable than a newly sprouted grass seedling. Let it try out once . . . and it is **DEAD!** Regardless if you are hand watering or relying on automatic sprinklers, you must be vigilant, always making sure that the soil TOP COVER is moist. And, later the newly sprouted grass is kept uniformly moist and **NEVER ALLOWED TO DRY OUT!**



Mow and Fertilize

Let the new grass grow to its normal height and then mow 1/3 of its height. Be sure to mow when grass is dry. Mowing young grass when it is wet can pull it out of the soil. After several mowings apply a light coating of granulated fertilizer (10 - 10 - 10). The middle number, the **PHOSPHOROUS**, will ensure the new roots are getting sufficient nutrients to develop healthy deep roots. Water thoroughly and deep. Deep watering, without runoff, will encourage roots to grow as deep as possible.



Lawn Recovery

Mowing



It's All About Blades and Cutting !

Most people think that mowing their lawn is a chore. Well it is. But, it is one chore that if performed properly each time can have positive effects on the health and well being of your lawn.

First, try to cut your lawn at the highest setting possible on the wheels of you mower. Remember, it is the green part of the grass blades that makes the sugars that are stored in the roots. The more *photosynthesis* taking place in the longer blades, the more food being stored in the roots, the happier the grass. In addition, the longer grass blades offer more shade for the base of the grass plants.

If you don't perform any other maintenance on your lawn mower, please take the time to sharpen the blade. A dull mower blade does not CUT the grass - it tears the ends of the blades - repeatedly. So every week you have induced fresh damage to the grass blades and made their torn ends an easy entrance for diseases and fungal infections which at the least make the appearance of your lawn sickly . . . and, at the worst, kill hundreds of grass plants in your lawn. If you want to be serious about this easy to do preventative measure 1) learn how to safely remove the blade from your mower (which includes removing the spark plug wire from the plug) and 2) invest in a second back up blade that you can keep sharp and ready for action when you feel the need for a change.

Finally, always mow in the opposite direction and reverse pattern from the time before. This avoids giving your lawn a patterned look of wheel tracks and cutting angles.



Skip's Tips For A GREENER THUMB

Starter Fertilizer

One important ingredient is too often missed when laying SOD, the application of a **STARTER FERTILIZER** is perhaps the most detrimental to starting your new SOD Lawn. You can't rely on the Scott's TURF BUILDER Lawn Fertilizer as your Starter Fertilizer because the State of California has legislated PHOSPHOROUS out of the formula. When that little grass plant as emerged from the seed husk, it has used up all the nutrient it carried with it to germination. That new root will immediately be looking for a vital source of **PHOSPHOROUS** needed for root development. The Garden Guy recommends you apply **Scott's Starter Fertilizer** to the prepared area just before you begin laying the sod.



BONUS TIP If, after you apply the Starter Fertilizer under your new sod, you have any left over - save this for a late feeding in the Fall. Roots do most of their developing in the cool months of the year !

Lawn Recovery

Watering



Too Little. Too Often !

Of all the Lawn Care factors, water irrigation is likely THE most misunderstood subject. The primary confusion comes in the belief that it is best to water often. Here in lies the problem - if you water every day for a few minutes - say 5 minutes per sprinkler zone - you will have watered “short”. The result, the roots of your grass plants (and that is what a lawn is made up of, thousands of individual grass plants) will grow only as deep as your soil is saturated. Remember, ROOTS are the key to any plant’s success. Conversely, if you were to change to a pattern of infrequent watering, even every other day and setting the zone timers to say 10 minutes, you would get deeper soil saturation and deeper root penetration. The result, a stronger, healthier and happier lawn.

Missing In Action !

The second most frequent contributor to poor irrigation is an in-ground irrigation system that is out of tune, or just plain not working properly, if at all. Your irrigation system, and the patterns it established, should have been designed to deliver complete coverage from day one. However, the use and abuse of your yard can have pattern changing effects on sprinkler heads and valves. A sprinkler head repeatedly hit by your mower could be out of alignment by as much as 180°. A low voltage wire yanked from control valve can leave an entire zone inoperable and not delivering water to its assigned location every time the system goes through its cycle. The result, brown patches of dead or dying grass of various sizes. The lesson here is obvious, you should examine your irrigation system at least once a month (especially during the hotter months of July, August, and September) by manually dialing through the cycles with enough time to observe and note the performance of each zone and sprinkler head to be sure they are working properly.

Rentals To The Rescue

Renting the right tool from a Rental Center can save time, energy . . . and your Back !!
I have long been a fan of the helpful Rental Associates at my Home Depot.

SOD CUTTER

To easily remove existing lawn turf, I highly recommend renting a gas powered Sod Cutter. This nifty machine makes fast work of slicing old turf lawns (and old netting), and weeds, off at the roots for easy pick up and disposal.



TILLER

You can't beat a gas powered, rear tine, roto-type tiller for digging up hard packed soil. It is also very convenient for mixing amendments into your soil prior to planting.



TRENCHER

Nothing makes the laying of irrigation pipe easier than renting a gas powered Trenching Machine. Typically this is done after tilling your soil, so as to NOT disturb your trench with the tiller. Select a Trencher that has power to the wheels to allow it's easy movement to the project, and alignment with the trench.



AERATOR

The most important tool for the rejuvenation of any lawn not needing to be replanted or Sodded. Aeration is the perfect companion to any OVERSEEDING project.



ROLLER

If you rent nothing else you should rent a Lawn Rollers. There is no substitute for gently compacting prepared soil for seeding, snugging down sod, or smoothing out overseed top cover. 1/2 filled with water is sufficient for any project.



TOOL RENTAL
Center at Home Depot

FREE

Operational Instruction With Every Rental.

4 hour and 24 hour rentals are available. Transport in a trailer or truck is necessary.
All towable rental tools, and rental trailers, require a 2" hitch ball.

Wishing You Every Success

I hope you have found this
Quick Guide To Lawn Recovery
valuable and inspiring.

Gardening is just one of the interests enjoyed by my league of faithful followers who have shared many of my experiences through one of my personally authored publications:

- WEBSITE skipsoutdoorliving.com
- BLOG skipsoutdoorliving.com/blog
- RESOURCES skipsoutdoorliving.com/resources
- CONTACT skip@skipsoutdoorliving.com



Better Gardening With Every Visit !

is divided into these main areas of interest

**Yard and Garden
Outdoor Cooking
Patio Living**



Skip Batchelder

