

Seed Lawn



New Seed Lawn

Even given the extra time and attention a new lawn from Seed requires, you can still achieve much of the same results that are promised by sod . . . just not as quickly.

And, if you don't give it the necessary attentions, you can experience the frustrations associated with a completely new lawn from Seed.



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.



Skip Batchelder



Lawns

New Lawn From Seed

A new lawn from seed is more economical . . . but, it requires a great deal more attention and care until lawn is mature enough to mow.

Remove Old Lawn

Remove the sod layer of your old lawn by hand, which is difficult and messy; or, by using a Powered Sod Cutter. Try to cut just below the netting of the old sod. You need to get this netting out of the lawn before you till the soil ! Otherwise, you will be constantly picking tangled netting out of your tiller's tines. The sod should come off in manageable pieces for disposal in your county landfill. A borrowed, or rented, truck or trailer will be very handy on this day.



Till Amendments Into Lawn Soil

Using a gas powered *rear tine* roto style tiller, till the area to a depth of at least 3 inches. **CAUTION:** take care to not break any existing irrigation pipes or sprinkler heads. Spread as much organic soil amendment (50/50 mix is ideal) as you can afford, and till again until the mix is evenly incorporated into the new lawn seed bed.



Rake The Soil Smooth

Rake soil, removing any rocks or debris, being careful to eliminate any depressions, and ensuring a lawn that will drain well. **Take care NOT to fill in your properties swail drainage.** Using a landscape rake, rake the area smooth and even along the intended grade.



Roll The Soil Into Place

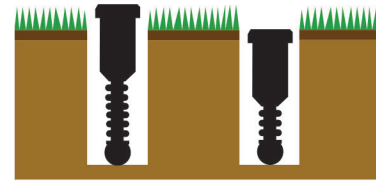
Roll the area. Now is the time to make certain that all sprinkler heads are level with the ground, that soil is even with surrounding hardscapes, and the drainage swail can clearly be seen.



A seeded lawn takes considerably longer to appreciate than a SOD lawn. However, the savings can be substantial.

Sprinkler Head Elevations

Soil should be raked and rolled so the tops of the sprinklers, when OFF, are even with the soil portion of the newly seeded lawn. If set to high, damage is sure to occur when repeatedly hit by the wheels of a lawn mower. Height can be easily adjust by using adjustable risers when installing or reinstalling a sprinkler head of any kind.



Set Too High
Susceptible To
Damage

Set To
Proper Height
No Damage

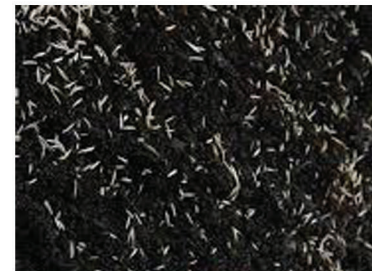
Spread The Fertilizer First

Using a mechanical spreader, evenly distribute **SCOTTS STARTER FERTILIZER**® following package directions. The higher phosphorous (middle #) will help to promote healthy new root growth from the newly sprouted grass seed. If you get any fertilizer on walks or drives sweep it into the lawn area BEFORE it gets wet.



Spread The Seed

Using the same spreader, evenly distribute a single layer of **PENNINGTON LAWN SEED**® following package directions. Take care to not leave piles of seed. And, be careful not to disturb the seed unevenly. Seed should be just touching. Too far apart and you will have gaps in your new lawn. Set the spreader according to the directions on the seed package Make absolutely sure the hopper is CLOSED before filling.



Apply Top Cover and Roll To Set

Cover the seed with a thin layer of 50/50 mix, compost or **Kellogg Topper**®. Roll the top cover once to set the seed bed. This top cover will 1) keep the seed from pooling in a heavy rain or errant sprinkler, 2) it will keep the birds from eating the seed.



Water The Seed Bed

Using a hose end sprinkler or your sprinkler system, apply water just often enough to keep the top cover moist. If the top cover is the color of dark chocolate, you are good. If it becomes the color of a paper grocery bag you are headed for trouble.



Never let tender new lawn seedlings dry out !



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 a 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 and shapes. 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. At the beginning of each of these critical months, manually dial through the cycles with enough time to observe and note the performance of each zone and sprinkler head to be certain they are working properly.

Lawns

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 New SEED Lawn.

First, try to cut your lawn at the highest wheel setting possible on your 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 to conserve moisture between scheduled irrigation.

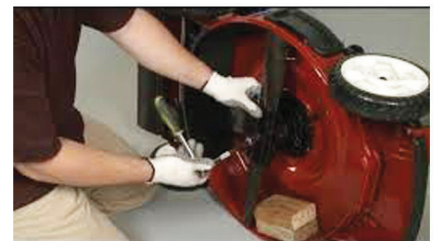
Ever wonder why your neighbor's grass looks so healthy and well kept ? It's likely he sharpens, or has sharpened, his mower's blade.

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 (from a PDF showing how to sharpen - including removal of the spark plug wire from the spark 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 cleaner, sharper cut.

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

Mowing





Skip's Tips
For A
GREENER THUMB

Tall Fescue Turf Grass

A Popular Choice

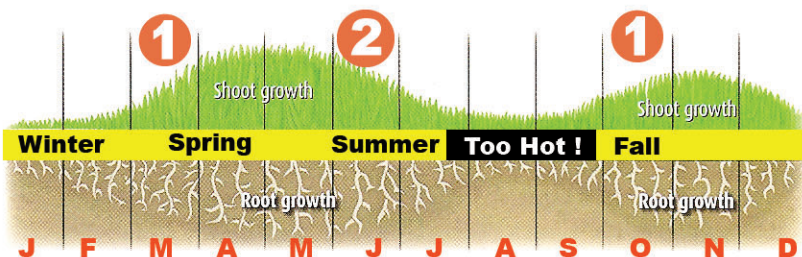
Tall Fescue Turf Grass is the lawn grass favored by landscapers and contractors and savvy homeowners in South Placer County. It is readily available in seed or sod. The local SOD blend preferred by most is The Dwarf Tall Fescue/Blue Blend.

Tall Fescue is selected for:

- Abundant, **DEEP ROOTS**, making it the most heat-drought tolerant of the cool season grasses.
- It's **THICKER BLADES** grow on the diagonal, allowing heavy treading and more activity.
- Require **LESS WATER** and are **SLOWER GROWING** than straight blue or rye grass lawns.
- Good **SHADE TOLERANCE**.

Tall Fescue is easily cared for:

- Mow to **2 in. high** in Summer. For most, this means raising your mower cutting level to its maximum height.
- Mow when **LAWN IS DRY**. Keep mower blade **SHARP**.
- **AVOID REPEATING MOWING PATTERN** week, after week. Alternate each week.
- **MULCH CUT** about every five times you mow. Return **FREE** nitrogen to soil.
- **WATER DEEPER**, but less often.
- **FERTILIZE** regularly throughout the year.



Fertilized at least three time each year, following the product schedule outline here:

- 1 Bandini All Purpose Fertilizer**
16-16-16 (Granulated / Spreader Applied)
- 2 Vigoro Ultra Turf Fertilizer**
29-0-4 (Granulated / Spreader Applied)

Editor's Note: Many states, California among them, have legislated PHOSPHORUS OUT of the formula for LAWN TURF fertilizers. This elimination from lawn formulas poses a problem for homeowners wishing to support the periods of **root growth** in the seasonal cycle of lawn turf grass. Substitution of a General Purpose Garden Fertilizer such as **Bandini 16-16-16** should be made at least once - in the Fall months.





Skip's Tips
For A
GREENER THUMB

Bulk Soil Amendment

The best **BULK** amendment for planting an entire new lawn from seed or sod is

BULK 50/50 MIX

This mixture, tilled into your soil, will offer an very nice bed in which the roots of the grass plants can get firmly established.

50/50 mix is available in bulk from these two local providers for pick up, or local delivery (fee).



(916) 652 - 7209

**Sierra College Blvd at Taylor Road
Loomis, California**



(916) 772 - 7900

**700 Berry St
Roseville, California**

If bulk soils are not convenient you can use these either of these

Bagged Lawn Soils

This mixture, turned into your soil will also offer an very nice bed in which the roots of the grass plants can get firmly established.

Don't be afraid to purchase extra bags. Any unopened bags are returnable to the origin of purchase.

**Skip's
Pick**



KELLOGG TOPPER
2 cu ft Bag



SCOTTS LAWN SOIL
1.5 cu ft Bag



Wishing You Every Success

I hope you have found this
Quick Guide To New Lawn From Seed
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

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is divided into these main areas of interest

Yard and Garden
Outdoor Cooking
Patio Living



Skip Batchelder

