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## **Newly Seeded Lawn Establishment**

- ◆ Suggested Reading: UW-Extension Publication A3434

### **Watering**

Watering is probably the most important aspect of establishing your lawn. Water all seeded areas regularly to keep the soil moist. This may mean watering 2-4 times per day depending on the weather (temperature, wind, rainfall, etc.). At this stage in lawn development, light applications of water on a frequent basis are more beneficial than heavy less frequent applications. The idea is to keep the top ½" – 1" of soil moist for seed germination for approximately 10 days to 3 weeks. Once the grass seedlings are about 1" – 2" tall, begin watering longer and less often (1 – 2 times per day). It is especially important at this stage to refrain from watering late in the day and to allow the soil to dry somewhat going into the night. High moisture during the night can promote seedling rot diseases and can destroy your new lawn. During this time period (approximately 1 week) the watering should provide moisture 2" – 4" deep in the soil promoting root growth and development. Reduce watering frequency gradually during the next few weeks to achieve approximately 2 water applications per week (1/2" per application) to provide 1" of water per week.

\*Note: Most sprinklers will apply about 1" of water in about 2 hours.

### **Fertilizing and Weed Control**

At seed installation, Breezy Hill Nursery applies a starter fertilizer for establishment. Those nutrients are used up quickly during seed germination. It is crucial to apply starter fertilizer again after the first mowing to promote root growth and improve the color of the grass plants. **Do not apply any "Weed & Feed" or weed control products until the new lawn has been mowed at least 3-4 times or more.** Begin a regular lawn fertilization program approximately 3 – 4 weeks after 2<sup>nd</sup> starter fertilizer application (See Established Lawn Care Section).

### **Mowing**

It is extremely important to ensure that lawn mower blades are sharp before mowing your new lawn. Sharp blades prevent uprooting seedlings and provide a clean cut of the grass plant preventing fraying of the tips. Do not mow when the grass is wet. Begin mowing when grass blades have reached a height of 3" using the "1/3 Rule" – only removing 1/3 of the height of the grass plants (achieving a 2" height). For the next 3 - 4 mowings, gradually increase mowing height to achieve a 3" final height. This helps the lawn retain moisture preventing pre-mature drought stress and aids in weed prevention.

## **Newly Sodded Lawn Establishment**

### **Watering**

Sodded lawns require watering approximately 1" immediately and then every 1-2 days, depending on the weather, until the sod is rooted. This typically takes about 2 weeks. It is important not to waterlog the soil as this will hinder root growth and development. Once the sod is rooted, continue watering to achieve 1" of water, but gradually decrease the frequency to result in applying 1" of water weekly with 1-2 applications (1/2" each) considering rainfall and other weather conditions.

### **Fertilizing and Weed Control**

At sod installation, Breezy Hill Nursery applies a starter fertilizer for sod establishment and promotion of root growth. Those nutrients are used up in about 2-4 weeks. Apply a regular lawn fertilizer with slow-release nitrogen after the first or second mowing to achieve 1 lb. of Nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of turf. Begin a regular lawn fertilization program approximately 6 - 8 weeks after this fertilizer application (See Established Lawn Care Section). Weed control products can be applied after the sod is rooted, although we would recommend waiting until after 2 mowings.

**\*Turn over for more - Continued on back of page**



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## **Newly Sodded Lawn Establishment – (continued)**

### **Mowing**

It is extremely important to ensure that lawn mower blades are sharp before mowing your new lawn. Sharp blades prevent uprooting or damaging new sod and provide a clean cut of the grass plant preventing fraying of the tips. Do not mow when the grass is wet. Once the sod is rooted, allow the soil to somewhat dry and become firm to begin mowing (after approximately 2 weeks). The first mowing should be done with a small hand mower set at the highest setting. Continue mowing using the "1/3 Rule" – only removing 1/3 of the height of the grass plants, gradually decreasing mowing height to achieve a 3" final height. This may require mowing every 2-3 days to gradually decrease the height appropriately. If this is not possible, you may have to rake or bag-up the clippings for the next 1-2 mowings. Mowing at the 3" height helps the lawn retain moisture preventing pre-mature drought stress and aides in weed prevention.

### **Aeration**

Most sod is grown in a different type of soil media (peat-based) than normal soils in our area. This can make it difficult for the sod to root well. Core-aeration is essential within the first year (even as soon as 6-8 weeks after installation) to promote root growth and development into the soil that it is installed on. Aeration is also highly recommended on a yearly or twice a year schedule to continue to promote a healthy root system. Remember healthy roots promote drought resistance and healthier top growth in all plants.

## **Established Lawn Care**

- ◆ Suggested Reading: UW-Extension Publication A3435

### **Watering**

Turfgrasses are one of the highest water requiring/using plants around. Established lawns will continue to require 1" of water per week for healthy growing conditions. This is usually supplied by natural rainfall patterns in Spring and Fall. Typically, cool season grasses will go into dormancy during mid-summer if this water requirement is not fulfilled. Summer dormancy is a natural way for the grasses to survive during stressful conditions. Established lawns can survive a dormancy period of up to 3 months!

### **Mowing**

Once again, it is extremely important to ensure that lawn mower blades are always sharp before mowing your lawn. Sharp blades provide a clean cut of the grass plant preventing fraying of the tips. As a rule of thumb, lawn mower blades should be sharpened minimally once per year. We strongly advise sharpening them twice a year or even monthly. (Believe it, or not, this practice will also help make your lawn mower last longer and run more efficiently as it provides less stress on the engine.) Do not mow when the grass is wet. Regular lawn mowing should occur at 3-10 day intervals, depending on growing conditions. Remember to continue using the "1/3 Rule" - only removing 1/3 of the height of the grass plants achieving a mowing height of 3". This 3" height helps the lawn retain moisture preventing pre-mature drought stress and aides in weed prevention. Lower mowing heights can occur, however the "1/3 Rule" should still be used. Using a lower mowing height, carries the risk of allowing quicker evaporation of soil moisture and weed occurrence is elevated.

### **Fertilizing and Weed Control**

A regular lawn nutrition program typically contains 4 fertilizer applications per year. Avoid early Spring applications of fertilizer as this promotes extensive top growth, retarding root growth necessary for a healthy turf. A helpful holiday schedule is 1) Memorial Day (end of May); 2) Independence Day (July 4); 3) Labor Day (beginning of Sept.); 4) Halloween (Oct. 31). The application rate should be approximately 1# of Nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application (1/2# in shady locations).

If concerned about crabgrass prevention, try applying a pre-emergent product for that purpose without any fertilizer in it in late April - early May. Most "Weed & Feed" products do not produce effective results. Application timings are contradictory to suggested optimal application schedules. Liquid "weed killers" are most effective.

\*Be aware of local fertilizer restrictions concerning Phosphorus fertilizers.