

Installing Overseeded Turf in the Fall and Winter

Turf can be installed anytime during the year, provided that irrigation frequency is sufficient to maintain adequate moisture for root development.

Installing turf in fall or winter does away with dust, mud and erosion that can occur on a bare surface yard. And, the turf will start greening up sooner in the spring. Also, overseeded rye on warm season grasses helps the turf establish roots faster which is especially helpful on sloping surfaces.

Bermuda Turf Overseeded with Ryegrass

Bermudaturf overseeded with ryegrass offers two advantages:

1. The overseeded rye retains green color late into the winter, for a pleasing appearance.
2. The ryegrass serves as an "indicator" when watering is needed.

Installing Bermuda-Rye Turf:

1. Preparation - Grade lot to proper slope, remove rocks and debris, level and smooth soil surface. If the surface is hard or compacted, work soil 4" to 6" deep with a spade or rototiller. If soil is too loose, rolling can be done to firm up the surface. Fertilization may also help root growth.

2. Installation - Lay turf as soon as possible after it is delivered,. Begin laying along a driveway, walk or other straight edge. Butt joints together tightly, but don't overlap. Alternate rows so joints are staggered, like rows of brick. Use a sharp knife to cut and fit turf around curves, trees, borders, etc.

Water thoroughly after turf is installed, wetting the soil to a depth of 6" to 8" (1-2 hours per sprinkler setting). If all turf is not installed the day it is delivered, **water the portion installed the same day to prevent it drying out overnight.**

3. Care and Management - **Water new turf daily for the first 6 - 10 days unless the soil is saturated.** Put on about 1/4" per watering on turf installed in the fall and winter. Thereafter, water as necessary to keep the ryegrass in the turf green and healthy. If the overseed rye starts to die out, chances are the bermuda turf is also dying. Keep pet and foot traffic off new turf for at least 10 days.

Mow as necessary to keep rye cut back. Cutting height should be 1 1/2" to 2". Mow often enough so that no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade is cut off at a time. (During extreme cold weather, the rye may also begin to brown or go dormant; watering of the Bermuda turf should be continued to prevent the soil and roots from drying out.)

Continue watering regularly into spring. Reduce mowing height to 1/2 to 1" when average nighttime temperatures reach 50 degrees. This will cause the ryegrass to die out and bring the Bermudaturf out of dormancy leaving a growing, healthy Bermudaturf lawn. Failure to mow frequently at a low height could result in delayed Bermudaturf growth and possible bare spots after the ryegrass dies. Do not allow the ryegrass height to exceed 1 1/2". Once the Bermudaturf begins growing and nighttime temperatures reach 60 degrees, fertilize with a high nitrogen and potassium fertilizer.

Transitioning Over-Seeded Hybrid Bermudagrass

In spring, when warm weather begins, the overseeded lawn should be managed to encourage the Hybrid Bermudaturf to green up and to remove the Ryegrass.

Watering

Correct watering is one of the most important factors involved in the transitional process. During the early spring, we suggest that you water at least one (1) time per day (morning or afternoon). For best results, you should be putting down from 1 1/2" to 2" of water per week. As the turf matures, you can begin to cut down on the number of waterings, but water a little heavier each time. For best transitioning results, it is important that the hybrid bermudaturf be kept moist and growth is not inhibited during the recovery period. **KEEP WATERING** at an ample level until Hybrid Bermudaturf is well rooted.

Mowing

Proper mowing heights are also very important. The following table will show you the best height at which to maintain your lawn:

- Tifgreen.....	1/2" - 1"	- SunTurf®.....	3/4" - 1 1/2"
- Santa Ana.....	3/4" - 1"	- Midiron.....	1" - 1 1/2"
- TifwayII.....	1/2" - 1"		

A rule of thumb is to mow often enough so you're not cutting off more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at a time. Keep mower blades sharp so that the turf is cut evenly and cleanly. **MOW SHORT (3/4")** to stress ryegrass and open hybrid bermudaturf to sunlight.

Fertilization

We suggest a well balanced application of fertilizer at least two (2) times during the summer months. A spring application should include at least one (1) pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of your lawn. The improved hybrid bermudaturf should not be stressed at the transitional period with high nitrogen applications and aerification. Check with your local garden center or extension office for suggestions on other nutrient requirements.