

## Radio Program 7/14/18 Overseeding lawns

Good Morning Brad,

Today I would like to talk a little about our lawns. If your lawn looks like mine, and the drought was a little hard on it and made it thinner than you would like... It's time to get geared up to overseed your yard to help fill in those bare spots, as early September is the best time to get your yard thickened up. There are four keys to being successful in replanting or overseeding a lawn: proper rates, even dispersal, good seed to soil contact, and proper watering.

Evenness is best achieved by carefully calibrating the seeder or by adjusting the seeder to a low setting and making several passes to ensure even distribution. Seeding a little on the heavy side with close overlapping is better than missing areas altogether, especially for the bunch-type tall fescue, which does not spread. Multiple passes in opposite directions with the seeder should help avoid this problem. A more serious error in seeding is using the improper rate. For tall fescue, aim for 6 to 8 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet for new areas and about half as much if you are overseeding or seeding areas in the shade.

Kentucky bluegrass is a much smaller seed so less is needed for establishment. Use 2 to 3 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet for a new lawn and half that for overseeding or in shady areas. Using too much seed results in a lawn more prone to disease and damage from stress. The best way to avoid such a mistake is to determine the square footage of the yard first, and then calculate the amount of seed. But not using enough seed can also be detrimental and result in a clumpy turf that is not as visually pleasing.

Establishing good seed to soil contact is essential for good germination rates. Slit seeders generally help you achieve good contact at the time of seeding by dropping seed directly behind the blade that slices a furrow into the soil. Packing wheels then follow to close the furrow.

Core aerators can also be used to seed grass. You will need to go over an area at least three times in different directions, and then broadcast the seed. Germination normally occurs in the aeration holes because the holes stay moist longer than a traditional seedbed. Meaning that this method requires less watering!

If the soil has been worked by a rototiller, you will need to firm the soil with a roller or lawn tractor and then use a light hand rake to mix the seed into the soil. A leaf rake often works better than a garden rake because it mixes seed a little shallower.

We have to remember to water newly planted areas lightly, but often! Making sure to keep the soil constantly moist but not waterlogged. During extremely hot days, a new lawn may need to be watered three times a day. If watered less, germination can still happen but it will be at a slower pace. Cool, calm days may require watering only every couple of days. As the grass plants come up, gradually decrease watering to once a week if there is no rain. Let the plants tell you when to water. If you can push the blades down and they don't spring back up quickly, the lawn needs water. Once seed sprouts, try to minimize traffic (foot, mower, dog, etc.) seeded areas receive until the seedlings are a little more robust and ready to be mowed. You should begin mowing once seedlings reach 3 to 4 inches tall.

If you have any questions on seeding a new lawn or overseeding you can give me a call at the office at 785.448.6826 or shoot me an email at [reschaub@ksu.edu](mailto:reschaub@ksu.edu)