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## Shade Grass Lawns

The best time to plant cool season grasses (fescue, ryegrass, etc.) is as soon after September 1st as possible. Early planting will avoid chickweed and henbit competition and allow the grass to establish before leaves start falling.

### Seeding Rates:

- New Lawns – 9-10 lbs. of fescue or ryegrass per 1,000 sq. ft.
- Existing Lawns – over-seed yearly with 4-6 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. depending on existing stand.

### Preparation:

#### New Lawn Establishment:

- **Grading** – Whether the lawn is flat or contoured, a good job of grading is essential. Water should drain away from the house, patio, drive and walks. A slope of ¼" per horizontal foot is minimum. Walks, drives and patios should be 1 to 2" higher than the soil surface.
- **Tilling and Fertilizing** - Cool season grasses will grow best in fertile soil and in a partly shaded location. Prepare the soil 2 to 3" deep with a roto-tiller (½ to 1 ½" deep under trees). Till 10 lbs. of 10-20-10 fertilizer per 1,000 sq. ft. into the soil. Level and firm the soil enough that a person does not sink in more than ½" when walking over the area. A slightly cloddy soil (marble size) is better than finely pulverized soil. Apply the seed using a spreader, then cover the seed by dragging the back side of a leaf rake over it. Reserve 1 to 2 lbs. of seed to spot treat areas that do not germinate.
- **Existing Lawn Renovation:**
  - Mow the lawn very short (1-2") and vigorously rake to expose part of the soil surface. Use a steel rake, shovel or golf shoes to rough-up bare spots. Apply the seed using a spreader. Fertilize with 8-10 lbs. of 10-20-10 fertilizer per 1,000 sq. ft. or on more established lawns where minimal seeding is needed 8-10 lbs. of 16-8-8 per 1,000 sq. ft.

**Watering:** The most critical time in establishing a lawn is from seed germination until the grass emerges from the soil. Keep it continually moist during this time (water daily). After the grass emerges, water as needed. As the grass becomes more established, water less often, but water for LONGER periods of time to encourage deep root growth.

**Mowing:** Mow the young grass as soon as it exceeds 2" in height with a sharp mower set at 2". Maintain this mowing height for the remainder of the season. Mow frequently enough so not more than 1" is removed at a time.

**Weed Control:** DO NOT apply any pre-emergent herbicide (Balan, Barricade, or Portrait) to the lawn before or after seeding. DO NOT apply 2,4-D or other broadleaf herbicides before grass is mature enough that it has been mowed several times.