

Questions ?

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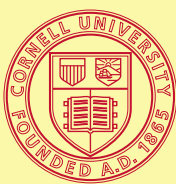
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Repetitive Overseeding

Sow Success By Repeating Your Seeding

Is your lawn thin, full of crabgrass and other annual weeds, or damaged by insects such as white grubs or chinch bugs? If the answer is yes, then repetitive overseeding can help. Repetitive overseeding is an easy method to make existing lawns more dense by simply sowing more seed.

Repetitive overseeding can help the lawn crowd out weeds, reducing the need for pre-emergent herbicides, such as "crabgrass preventer." Since crabgrass preventer is the number one pesticide used in New York State, using overseeding methods instead could have a significant positive environmental impact.

Just what is repetitive overseeding?

Very simply, it is putting grass seed down on an existing lawn once a week for several weeks. The only equipment required is a common lawn spreader. In most cases, no cultivation or aeration is required to start a repetitive overseeding program.

Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County researchers have found that repetitive overseeding has the potential to increase the density of lawns or sports fields by up to 90%.

The key points for success:

- Choosing the right seed. Repetitive overseeding works best when perennial ryegrass

seed is used. Perennial ryegrass has the ability to germinate much quicker than other types of grass seed, often in less than seven days.

- Time of year. The **best** time to start is right after Labor Day. Cool weather and warm soils enhance seed germination, and as the crabgrass starts to die in early October, your new perennial ryegrass seedlings can move in and take over! Repetitive overseeding is also possible in spring, starting in late March or early April. While some of the perennial ryegrass will germinate before the crabgrass, your results will not be nearly as impressive as with fall overseeding.

- Rainfall or irrigation. All seed needs water to germinate, and results may be poor when moisture is lacking. In drought conditions, repetitive overseeding may provide as little as 10% new turf cover, whereas under average rainfall, results can reach as high as 90% new turf.

- Multiple seed applications. This is the "repetitive" in this method. Make at least 3 applications of seed, each a week or so apart. More applications are fine, too. Applying a large amount of seed to the lawn gives the competitive advantage to the perennial ryegrass over the weed seeds which are already lurking in the soil.

- Don't apply crabgrass preventer. Most of these herbicides will inhibit grass seed germination, and are therefore incompatible with repetitive overseeding.

Lawn Weeds ?

Bare Spots ?

Repetitive Overseeding Can Help !



- Proper seed rate. A good overseeding application rate is 3 pounds of perennial ryegrass seed per 1,000 square feet of lawn.

Commonly asked questions about overseeding:

Do I have to add lime or fertilizer to my lawn?
A soil pH or fertility test is the only way to know for sure if you need to add lime or fertilizer. In general, applying a starter fertilizer will probably help your overseeding efforts.

Can I spread the seed by hand? Yes, but for large areas a drop spreader or broadcast spreader will likely be much easier.

Can I use Kentucky bluegrass or fine fescue seed instead of perennial ryegrass? You can try repetitive overseeding with other types of seed, but don't expect as quick or dramatic results. Fine fescues take at least two weeks, and Kentucky bluegrass at least three weeks, to germinate.

When will I see results? New grass seedlings should be visible in a few weeks. If seeding in the fall, complete results will not be visible until the next year.

Do I have to calibrate my spreader? No, but your results will be more accurate if you do.



How to apply the seed:
Grass seed can be applied using either a broadcast or drop spreader. **If the owner's manual for your spreader shows the setting to use to apply 3 lbs. of perennial ryegrass per 1,000 square feet, set it and start seeding!**

- If you don't have this information, you can calibrate your spreader. Follow these steps:
1. Set your spreader so that the holes are about 20% open and 80% closed.
 2. Put a quantity of seed in the spreader.
 3. Lay a tarp on the ground and measure its length. While 10 feet is ideal, any length will do.
 4. Apply seed to the tarp by pushing the spreader across it, just as if you were applying it to the lawn. Make sure to open and close the hopper precisely as you cross onto and off of the tarp.
 5. Determine the width of the application for a drop spreader by measuring the width of the spreader itself. For a broadcast spreader, measure how far the seed was thrown.
 6. By multiplying length by width, you have the area to which the seed was applied.
 7. Weigh the quantity of seed that collected on the tarp.
 8. Use the formula in the next column to determine how much seed the spreader will apply in 1,000 square feet.
 9. Change the setting and repeat the steps above as necessary.

Example:
Tarp length = 10 feet
Spreader width = 3 feet
Area to which seed was applied = 30 square ft.
Amount of seed collected from the tarp = 0.09 lb.

To find out how much seed would be applied in 1,000 square feet, use the following formula, solving it for X.

$$\frac{\text{Pounds of seed on tarp}}{\text{Area to which seed was applied (sq. ft.)}} = \frac{X}{1,000 \text{ sq. ft.}}$$

$$\frac{0.09 \text{ lbs.}}{30 \text{ sq. ft.}} = \frac{X}{1,000 \text{ sq. ft.}}$$

X = 3 pounds applied

Repetitive overseeding may work if your lawn:

- Contains primarily annual weeds, such as crabgrass
- Is generally open and thin
- Has mostly sunny to full sun conditions
- Has average to good soil

Repetitive overseeding may NOT work if your lawn:

- Contains mostly aggressive perennial weeds, such as ground ivy
- Is in heavy shade
- Has very sandy or very compacted soil
- Has no irrigation and the weather is extremely dry

