

Lawn Care

Overseeding and Repairing Bare Spots



Overseeding

Why Overseed

Most homeowners plant grass seed once and wonder why their lawn gets thinner and weedier every year. That's because even with proper fertilization, turf grass reproduction naturally slows down over the years and lawns simply need more seeds in order to stay thick and weed-free. But it's easy and gets your lawn thick again and a thick lawn, if mowed to a height of 3 inches, is mostly weed-free. The other benefit of overseeding is that the new seed you'll use may be more disease-resistant and drought-tolerant than the seed originally used to create your lawn. Are you sure your lawn needs it? Here's a tip: Spread the grass blades and if you can see the soil, it's too thin and needs reseeding.

When

The best time is the same as for planting new cool-season lawns: August 20 to October 15.

How

1. Mow at the lowest possible setting, with a grass-catcher if you have one.
2. Rake the area with a hard rake, leaving no debris. This is important to provide direct contact between seed and soil.
3. This is a good time to do the recommended yearly addition of organic matter to your lawn by spreading a 1/4- to 1/2-inch layer of compost (we recommend Leafgro) before seeding.
4. Spread seed — the same amount as for a brand new lawn.
5. Keep the seeds moist for 14 days, just as you would a new lawn. That means watering one to three times a day, depending on whether is hot and dry or cloudy and cool. Missing a day or two of watering can mean wasting all that grass seed and the effort expended to plant it.
6. Mow when the old grass reaches 3 inches.

Repairing Bare Spots in Your Lawn

Bare spots happen. They're unsightly and discouraging, but fixable.

When

The best time, just like for starting a new lawn, is from August 20 to October 15. The second best time is in the spring.

How

1. Remove plant debris with a hard rake or cultivator.
2. Especially if your soil is clay, it's helpful to spread some compost over the area.
3. Smooth with a rake or smaller tool, like your hand.
4. Sprinkle a grass seed over the spot.
5. Tamp it down with your hands.
6. Cover the seed with 1/8" layer of Leafgro or compost, then cover with Seed Accelerator, which helps to retain moisture and contain fertilizer. Seed Accelerator also keeps the birds from eating the seed.
7. Water at least daily to keep the seeds constantly moist for 2 weeks, as you would for a new lawn. If the weather is hot and sunny, you'll need to water twice or even three times a day.



Patching with Sod Instead

1. Remove soil to one inch or so below the level of the surrounding soil, so the sod will be at the same level as the existing lawn.
2. Cut sod to fit the spot with a snug fit against the surrounding turf.
3. Follow watering instructions that come with the sod — carefully.

Dog Damage

We love our dogs but they can be terrible on lawns, especially the females, and if you have one you already know that. They leave telltale dead spots with green growth around the edges.

Always flush the area with water immediately after a dog has peed on it, if possible. Also remove feces as soon as possible to keep it from smothering and killing the grass. If damage has already been done, follow the instructions above for repairing spots.

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