

TURF & STEM



COOL SEASON GRASS OVERSEEDING GUIDE

A DIY Guide for Homeowners



TURF & STEM ON YOUTUBE

QUICK OVERSEEDING STEPS

1

Order supplies, pick grass seed and make sure you haven't applied any chemicals that would prevent grass from growing.

2

Mow as low as possible, rake all areas, and pick up the clippings and debris.

3

Optional: use a dethatcher or aerator to prepare the soil.

4

Spread the seed evenly, focusing on any bare or thin spots.

5

Apply a starter fertilizer and fungicide.

6

Water, water, water. Water 3 - 4 times a day for the next 3 weeks. Don't let it dry out.

7

Once new grass reaches 2 - 3 inches, mow and collect clippings.

8

Take care of any weeds and undesirable grasses that might have sprung up.





SAMPLE OVERSEEDING TIMELINE

	August				September				October			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Planning	Review products used for herbicides Order seed	Test irrigation Mower maintenance Check weather forecasts										
Weed & Fungus Control					Seed-safe weed control Fungicide application						Weed Control	
Removing the Debris				Rake / Dethatch Aerate Level or fix any low spots								
Seeding					Apply Seed		Spot Seed					
Watering		Regular Watering			Watering scheduled for 3 to 4 times per day			Reduced watering, 2 to 3 times per day		Water as needed		
Fertilizing					Starter Fertilizer						High Nitrogen Fertilizer	
Mowing				Low Mowing		No Mowing			First Mowing	Regular Mowing		Low Mowing

This plan is intended as a general guide for areas that have “cool season” grasses. Adjust accordingly depending on your specific location and weather.

All recommended products (with active ingredients) are available online or at major retailers.

Please make sure to read and follow all instructions. Do not exceed the annual active ingredient quantity per acre as listed on the label.

Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment. This includes eye, and skin coverings and respiratory masks. Be cautious of children and pets.

Please be aware of the environment. Know the impact before you spray or spread herbicides and insecticides.

If you have any questions, reach out to us on social media, or go to our website www.TurfandStem.com.

DIY OVERSEEDING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Overseeding your lawn is the quickest and easiest way to get the grass you want. If you are willing to do a little heavy lifting and dedicate some time, you won't need to hire a company, buy a guide, or watch a video with 17 steps. By following these basic concepts, you will thicken your grass, get rid of those bare spots, and improve your home's curb appeal. With overseeding you can take your lawn from "meh" to "amazing" and be the envy of the neighborhood.

Mother Nature has been growing grass long before we humans ever started keeping lawns. Look around, there's grass in the cracks of your driveway, in your flower beds, between the pavement and sewer grates, and sometimes in gutters. There is grass everywhere in this world, and 99.99% of it was grown without human assistance. Nature does not require top dressing, aeration, or a compost spreader. With your help and a little hard work, grass can grow anywhere you want it to.

There is no shortage of salesmen and companies trying to sell you products by getting you to use their "guide". You don't need to buy special tools, subscribe to services, purchase specific chemicals, order ten tons of dirt or spend weeks of your time laboring over every detail. Remember, you don't need a sales pitch to grow grass, you need sun, water, and the seed touching soil to grow grass. That's it.

Don't worry, don't stress. We're talking about grass here. This should be an enjoyable process with a few sore muscles thrown in. If you hit the three main points, timing, soil contact and water, you can grow grass! Don't let the flood of information online, on YouTube, Facebook and forums overwhelm you. This is your chance to learn about growing grass and to get to know your property better.

Always remember, to grow grass all you need is the three main ingredients of the recipe: sun, soil and water.

This guide is for homeowners that want "cool-season" grasses in their lawns. Generally, a cool-season grass can be grown in the upper two-thirds of the United States such as New England, Upper Midwest, Northern California, High Plains, Pacific Northwest and the central tier states from the Atlantic Coast west through Kansas.

Tall fescue, ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass are the most popular types of "cool-season" grasses and are named such because they can't grow in the year-round heat and humidity of Florida, Arizona, Texas and Southern California. Similarly, "warm-season" grasses like St. Augustine and Bermuda grass can only thrive in warm climates and would easily die-off in the cooler months of New England's spring, fall and winter.

WHY OVERSEED?

Planning for the future in lawn care is going to be a constant endeavor. Whenever you do anything to the lawn, you can't just think about the immediate impact, but also what will happen over the next few weeks and months from then.

The first question will be if you want to just leave your lawn alone, overseed it or do a complete renovation. Each option will depend on your own unique circumstance and what you want to accomplish.

A renovation is when you completely kill-off or remove all the living grass and plants in your lawn so you can plant grass seed without interference. This is the most extreme option and is recommended in two instances.

The first is when your lawn is primarily weeds and undesirable grasses, like crabgrass. If you have a lot of rough looking grass, bare spots, ugly weeds, and land that hasn't been maintained, it may be quicker to achieve the results you want by doing a renovation.

The second reason you would perform a renovation is if you want to update your lawn and grow a specific type of grass. Maybe you want an easier to maintain lawn, or something that resembles the grass you find on a golf course? Or the grass is old and needs an upgrade with newer, better cultivars of grasses.

For whatever reason you want to renovate, make sure you're willing to put in the additional time, money, and effort above what overseeding might accomplish.

If you want a thicker lawn, or to introduce new types of grasses, overseeding might be the best option instead of renovating.

You don't always need to renovate or overseed. It's possible your lawn is in good shape but may be having some problems with weeds and crabgrass. Because the products used to control these undesirable plants will usually prohibit grass seed from growing, it might be better to focus on eliminating weeds and making your existing grass as healthy as possible instead of overseeding.

TYPE OF GRASS TO USE

You go online, stop by a big box store, or even ask your local nursery for suggestions on what seed to use. The reality is if you ask four landscape professionals what is best, you'll get five different answers.

You might have an older lawn that hasn't seen new seed in decades. You might have just thrown down whatever blue covered seed is cheapest at your local home improvement retailer. It might be a new home you moved in to and have no idea what the history of the lawn is. Or you might be willing to spend hundreds of dollars for a few pounds of the most premium seed available. No matter what, this is a choice you're going to have to make for the results you want.

If you get a lot of sun and don't have in-ground irrigation, turf type tall fescue might be a good option. If you get a lot of shade, a bluegrass and

rye grass mix is a candidate. If you're daring and plan on reel mowing every day at half an inch, you're probably looking at a monoculture Kentucky bluegrass. Do the research and try to align the characteristics of the seed to the results and lifestyle you want.

Whatever you choose, you will want to try to match what you already have existing in the lawn. If you've used a "sun and shade" mix in the past to fill in some spots, you might want to stick with that. If you always used a specific brand, continuing with it isn't a bad idea.

The reason you want to try to match what you currently have is to avoid mismatched grass shades and color.

Each grass type has very different color and texture. Rye grass is very fine, whereas fescue can be thicker. Additionally, each species of seed, or cultivar, is provided a ranking based on how dark a shade of green it can be. If the grass seed you are overseeding with is significantly darker, it will noticeably stand out against the lighter colored grass, especially in areas where it isn't spread evenly or where more seed was put down. Most people call this "tiger striping" or "leopard spots".

A great resource as to what grass type grows best in your region would be your local university extension or college agricultural center. Look it up online and you'll probably find some useful guides on what works best for your region.

PLANNING AND TIMING

You will always want to plan several steps before getting started. Lawn care is a marathon, not a sprint. Think about what your plans are next week, next month, next season and even next year. Make sure your products are available, calculate how long it will be to prepare the ground, and only then put the seed down. Also take into consideration any unforeseen issues like family events, overtime at work or your vacation schedule that might cause a bump in the road.

You will want to time the process to avoid two things, excessive heat and excessive cold.

Too much heat will make it difficult to water and keep the seed moist, and it will kill off any newly grown grass. This is why it's so difficult, but not impossible, to seed a lawn in the spring. Sure, you might be able to grow the grass while being aided by the slew of spring showers, but once those July and August temperatures come by, your seedlings with their small, underdeveloped roots are going to get fried under the heat of the summer sun.

If it gets too cold your seedlings will turn into green icicles. You must put your seed down and have the grass become established before any real frost or snow hits your yard. It's necessary to give the grass time to grow, develop roots, and grow big enough to be able to survive the winter.

So, there's a sweet spot. You'll want to put the seed down when the temperature isn't expected to go into the 80's for the high and doesn't go into the 30's for the low. You'll need at least 45 days of this range, so think somewhere around the first couple weeks of September to put your seed down. You may want to search for historical temperatures for your area to better plan. The date that you plant your seed is usually the point that you plan your overseed around.

From the day you plan on putting the seed down, you will calculate all major steps from that point, including when you will be preparing the grass, how long your irrigation period will be, when you can expect your first mowing and even when to order supplies.

For example, if you're going to put down seed the first week of September, that means your first physical action in the lawn needs to be started sometime in mid to late August...mowing low and getting rid of all the debris to get a good bed of dirt.

Overseeding is just a series of steps. You can't skip ahead, and you can't take a shortcut. It's important to map out your strategy in the early

summer and have a calendar of benchmarks that you set for yourself to keep on track.

Let's try to plan for the first part of our overseed with an example. You're going to want to think a few steps ahead and start from when you expect to put the seed down, and then work backwards. For most homeowners with cool season grasses, you will want to get the seed down during the first week of September. This is when the "sweet spot" mentioned before for temperatures usually start for the season.

In this example the target date for seeding will be September 5th. You will need to calculate the amount of time it will take for you to do the physical work, wait before you can seed after using any chemicals including weed killer and pre-emergent, the amount of time to physically remove the old grass and prepare the lawn for seed, and some extra time in case something unexpected comes up.

Assuming no chemicals will interfere with the schedule, you should plan on about a week to start mowing low, removing the debris and doing any other work you want to do to prepare the soil. That brings us back to August 29th as the first day to begin physical work.

This gives us enough time to plan for bad weather and unexpected life events. Working further back, you need to have most of your supplies ready by August 22nd, including your fertilizer, grass seed and gardening equipment. Your research and all decisions on what to purchase will need to start in July.

Believe it or not, the actual decision to overseed will have to be made in the spring. The reason is what you put down for chemicals and weed control in the early months of the year can affect what you can do later. Many products that are combined with fertilizer contain herbicides that can last in your lawn anywhere from 30 to 120 days. Some pre-emergent can last up to 6 months. These herbicides not only prevent weeds and crabgrass from growing, but they also

prevent new grass from germinating. Planning for your overseed starts in the spring by monitoring what products you're using so they don't adversely affect your seeding in the fall. If you want to seed in September, you can't use any products that have lasting herbicides to the time you plan to seed. If you're unsure, the label or instructions will tell you how long until you can plant new grass after using the product.

Next, you will want to figure out how large the area you plan to overseed is. This is necessary to determine how many pounds of seed you will need and how much fertilizer you will apply. The standard in the lawn industry is to measure the area in square feet. You can use two methods to determine the square footage of your yard.

The easiest is to use an online mapping program like Google Earth or Google Maps. There are also similar applications by other companies that will work, as long as it allows you to measure the perimeter of your lawn and calculate the area. Although using on line mapping tools isn't the most accurate, it will be close enough to provide you with the necessary information to put down the appropriate amount of product.

Another method is to physically walk your property and use either a measuring wheel or a long tape measure. If your yard is shaped as a square or a rectangle, you just need to multiply length times the width to determine square footage. If it is a more complex shape, you may have to split your yard into several rectangles or squares, determine the area for each one and then add the total together. This will give you the total square footage.

From this point you can now calculate the watering and mowing schedule from the day you lay your seed, September 5th.

STEP 1: PREPPING THE LAWN

Preparing your lawn for the seed will determine how successful your overseeding project will be. A little extra time and hard work will help to make

all the difference between getting your new grass to grow and just feeding the birds.

The first goal will be to prepare the soil so that the seed can have as much contact with the ground as possible. The key to establishing new grass and obtaining high rates of germination will be establishing a good bed of soil to receive the seed.

You don't need heavy equipment for your project to be successful. The grass will grow. However, the germination rates, or the percentage of seeds that grow to become blades of grass, will depend on how well everything is prepared.

You're putting in a lot of effort, time, and money towards overseeding, you want to increase your chances for success. The better prepared your soil is, the more seeds will grow, the better value you get for your money and elbow grease.

Everything mentioned in this step is optional but recommended. You will have a successful overseeding if you do the bare minimum. But these steps are about improving results and getting the most out of your time and effort.

Once you decided on timing, gathered all the supplies, and kindly prepared your neighbors for about a month of looking at an ugly lawn, you'll need to cut the existing grass as low as possible. Unlike a renovation, you're not trying to kill your current lawn, only trying to help the new grass compete with the old and encouraging seed to soil contact. If your old grass is too long, it will obstruct your new seedlings from growing.

Start your lawn mower and mow as low as you can while using the bagging setting. The goal is to scalp your yard, which means to cut the grass as low as possible to the ground. It's important during this step to make sure your lawn mower is on the bagging setting, and not mulching or side discharge. These settings will return the clippings to the ground making it more difficult to achieve seed to soil contact in the next step. You may have to make several passes with the lawn

mower, lowering the height adjustment after each pass until you reach the lowest setting.

After that, you will want to get a sturdy metal rake and give your entire yard a good once over, loosening up anything the lawn mower didn't grab. Rake into piles and bag the remaining debris up as well. The less grass and weeds and more exposed dirt you have the better. The idea is for the seed to contact the ground. This is where your time investment and hard work will pay off.

You could stop there and spread the seed, but the idea is improving your lawn for the long-term. If you have the time and resources, renting an aerator and power rake, or dethatcher, will save you time, some sore muscles and help with the finished product.

An aerator is a gas-powered machine that uses hollow cylinders to puncture the ground and pull-out plugs, or cores, of dirt. This creates thousands of small holes between 1 and 3 inches deep which helps to loosen the soil, allow moisture and nutrients to penetrate further into the ground and provide a protected bed for seed to grow out of. Most people leave the plugs on the lawn to decompose or break down.

Aerating helps to improve your soil by reducing compaction, or the density of the dirt. Making the soil easier for roots to grow in as well as the thousands of holes that will give the seeds a home is an encouraged step.

A dethatcher is another type of gas-powered machine that helps to remove thatch, debris and dead grass from the lawn. It uses metal blades, or tines, to spin across the lawn and pull up the dead organic material. This is especially helpful when trying to remove dead grass, so the seed has a better chance for contact with the soil.

The end result isn't going to be completely bare dirt. Old grass will actually help to keep the seed from moving around and retain moisture during watering. It also offers protection from birds and the heat of the sun. Don't worry if it's not perfect,

the grass seed will work itself down to the ground, and after it sprouts, it will shoot back up past the remaining old grass.

For many people, this is the most labor-intensive step. Now is also the time to fill in any divots, smooth any bumps and even out any areas in your yard.

STEP 2: SPREADING THE SEED

Now the easy part. You want to spread the seed evenly over the lawn. You'll want to use a spreader, either broadcast or drop. Your seed will also come with instructions on the bag as to what number setting to use. Whatever that setting is, lower it by a few. This will make less seed come out. It's better to make more passes with less seed coming out than fewer passes with a volcano of seed erupting from your spreader. This is going to help you regulate how you spread the seed, and to focus on areas that may need a little more and skip over areas that got enough already. For the edges, take a few handfuls and lightly sprinkle alongside each section as you walk.

No, you really can't put too much seed down. You just want a nice, even coating across your entire lawn. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how many pounds to put down per thousand square feet. Make sure to look for the "overseed" rate and not the "renovation" rate. But don't use it all up! Save some to use in a few weeks to reseed any areas that might not have come in.

After you spread the seed, take the back of a rake and give the area a light raking. This helps the seed work down to contact the soil. Although not necessary, a thin coating of peat moss or good quality compost can help the seed.

Picking the right seed is not only a matter of personal taste and preference for aesthetics, but it also depends on the conditions of your lawn and landscape, your ability to irrigate and your time commitment. There are many helpful resources and guides already available that can point you in the right direction as to what seed to

use in your lawn. However, two tips that I suggest are that you choose a grass type that will be reasonably easy to maintain because you never know what life has in store for you in the future, and that the seed is always easily available for future overseeding and patching that you need to do in upcoming seasons.

Seed is always calculated by pounds per square feet. Since you have already measured your lawn, read the label to determine how much seed you will need for proper coverage. The label should indicate how much you will need for overseeding. Make sure to look at the right number and not confuse it with the higher “renovation” number. You won’t need as much seed as you would for a renovation since you already have some healthy grass. But remember, with seed it never hurts to overcalculate a little on how much you’ll need.

Another option to help increase your germination rate is to rent a slit-seeder or slice-seeder. This machine is similar to an aerator and dethatcher but is designed to plant the grass seed for you. A slit or slice seeder has blades that will help you make thousands of small trenches in your lawn, deposit the seed in those grooves, and then cover it up with dirt.

A seeder will also help to break-up the top layer of soil and cut through the thatch layer, which may hinder seeds getting down to the soil.

STEP 3: WATERING

This is the most important, and difficult step. If you remember nothing else, remember this: If it dries, it dies.

You must keep the seeds damp 24/7 for at least the first 30 days after putting it down. Once you put the seed down, if it dries, it dies. Your goal is to keep the grass seed moist, or damp. The seed doesn’t need to be soaking wet at all times, but it must have moisture.

This is one of the reasons the timing step is so critical. If temperatures reach into the 90’s, you’re

going to be watering constantly to fight evaporation and heat. Normal temperatures in the 70’s should allow you to water 3 to 4 times throughout the day to maintain enough moisture in the seeds.

Before you put your seed down, you need to develop and test a watering plan. If you already have in-ground irrigation, now is the time to make sure all your sprinkler heads function, you know how to set your controls and you have appropriate coverage. Those that will be relying on traditional above ground sprinklers have a little more work to do.

There are many factors in developing an above ground watering plan for your new seed. The first is evaluating the size, shape, and topography of your property. You will need to have an idea of how many sprinklers to have and what coverage is possible for your square footage.



You then need to evaluate your environment for anything that might affect normal watering patterns or schedules. Evaluate what objects are in the area that shouldn’t get wet, like decking or grills, and determine how you will avoid them. Also consider how much direct sun or shade the area you plan to seed get throughout the day. Areas with more sun will require more water.

Finally, decide on what type of equipment you need. How many sprinklers will you need and what type? Will they be impact or spray? How do

you plan on watering during the day while you are at work? What is the best timer for a faucet? Each yard is different which means each solution will be unique. If you're away from home long hours invest in a sprinkler timer. If you can't move the sprinkler, pick up a garden hose splitter for the faucet and buy two sets of hoses.

Watering new seed is different from watering an established lawn. You always hear about deep, infrequent watering schedules for established grass to help the roots grow down. With new seed, it's just the opposite. There are no roots. All the action is right at the surface so if you're watering deeply, you're wasting your water.

There is no correct number of times you have to run your sprinklers every day because each lawn is unique, and changes based on the weather. Your goal is to keep it moist. Remember, if it dries, it dies.

However, you should expect to water your newly planted seed at least 3 to 4 times each day for the first 15 to 30 days, and 2 to 3 times for several weeks afterwards. Expect to water in the morning, the early afternoon, mid-afternoon and early evening.

If you notice it's unusually hot, add an extra round of watering that day. If there's rain in the forecast or cooler temperatures, you might be able to pull it back to 3 times. Your watering plan will change with the weather, be prepared to adapt as necessary.

STEP 4: FEEDING THE NEW GRASS

The new seedlings will need energy and nourishment to help get established. After you spread the seed, it's always a good idea to add some fertilizer to assist in the growing process. You can use any fertilizer labeled as "starter", or any available low nitrogen formula. Before you put any fertilizer down, there are two things to check before letting it hit the grass.

The first is to make sure that anything you put down in the next forty-five days doesn't have any ingredients that are used to control weeds. This is commonly referred to as "weed n' feed" or "all in one". Avoid anything that advertises that it kills or prevents clover, crabgrass or dandelion growth. These types of fertilizers contain chemicals, or herbicides, that will kill the young grass and prevent new growth.

The second is to understand what fertilizer you are using. As mentioned before, you want to use a low nitrogen fertilizer, generally something around or under twenty percent nitrogen. For this, you will need to know how to read a fertilizer label.

Manufacturers are required to provide consumers with the N-P-K analysis, which details how much nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium is contained in the product. They will generally appear on the outside of the bag and look similar to ratios like 32-0-4, 27-0-2 or 25-24-4. For growing grass, the first two numbers are the most important.

The percentage of nitrogen shouldn't be too high. Unless you purchase a starter fertilizer, try not to get anything with an N value over 20. Nitrogen helps to encourage above ground growth, but too much can damage the young grass. The next number to focus on is P, or phosphorus, which helps to encourage below ground growth by developing the root system. You will often only find high phosphorus in starter fertilizer since most states have banned the use of phosphorus in turf fertilizers unless it is promoted for establishing new growth.

Read the manufacturer's instructions and follow all directions. Spread the fertilizer the same day that you put the seed down.

STEP 5: WATCHING GRASS GROW

Congratulations, you have put in hours of work, sweat and your lawn looks like a complete disaster. Your neighbors will start to look at you

weird, and your spouse may begin contemplating a divorce.

If you've followed the steps and made sure your seed had the basics of sun, soil and water, it's just a matter of time before you see your hard work pay off. Different varieties of seed and environmental factors, like temperature, can cause seed to germinate at different times. In 7 to 10 days, you should start to see small blades starting to sprout.

You will not see instant results. Patience is key. Don't give up. Continue with your watering schedule. Once you start to see a few sprouts, the growth will continue exponentially.

During the growth period, try to limit activities on the seeded areas. Sure, you can walk on it lightly, but try to avoid heavy footsteps, wheelbarrows, bicycles, and other traffic in the area. New grass is resilient, but it does have its limitations.



Newly germinated grass among old debris.

STEP 6: MOWING AND MAINTAINING

After a few weeks your older grass should be recovering, and your new grass should be growing. You now have something that is starting to resemble a lawn again. There isn't much to do until your new grass reaches the two-inch mark, which should happen right around thirty days. Because of the water, fertilizer, and tender loving care you've been providing your yard, the existing grass will get extremely long. This is to be expected.

Soon, it will be time for your first mow. Cutting the grass frequently after the grass is established will help to encourage lateral growth, making it fill in and thicken up. But before you start, there's two items to keep in mind.

The first is to make sure your lawn mower is using the bagging function. You don't want to deposit any clippings onto the ground. This could lead to the delicate young grass being smothered and the seed that hasn't germinated yet getting buried. There's a time for mulching, now isn't it.

Secondly, sharpen your mower blades. The easiest way is to take them to a local lawn mower repair shop and have them done for a few dollars. However, you can also do it yourself with an angle grinder, a bench grinder, or a hand file. Just make sure you keep the same angle when you grind it down. It doesn't need to cut paper, but you should be able to catch it across your finger.

Using a sharp mower blade will give you a cleaner cut while making your new grass less susceptible to lawn fungus and disease. It's also going to help make it appear greener by reducing frayed edges, which appear brownish in color.

WEED AND FUNGUS CONTROL

Whenever you perform an overseed, your goal is to achieve optimal conditions to grow grass. This also means that you have inadvertently provided weeds and fungus with the best growing conditions possible. Everything that new grass loves, weeds and fungus love as well.

Weeds are, unfortunately, a byproduct of overseeding. Newly seeded lawns are delicate and weed issues are usually best addressed after the grass has matured. If you want to maintain a weed-free lawn during overseeding and for the time afterwards, there are few options available to you.

First, if the number of weeds is manageable and your yard isn't too large, your best option is mechanical removal. Yes, this means good ol' fashioned weed pulling. There are multiple tools on the market that help make weed removal easier, as well as help to preserve your back. But if you only have a few weeds and want to save some money, you can use tools you already have in the garage, like a flat-head screwdriver.

The majority of weed control is done with herbicides that target specific types of weeds. These herbicides are selective and won't harm mature grass. The problem is these chemicals are too toxic to use on newly planted seed or freshly sprouted grass and will damage or kill your new seedlings. Read the labels of some popular weed control products and they will advise you not to use their products anywhere from 30 to 120 days before and after planting grass.

However, all hope is not lost. There is one herbicide that is new to the turf industry that will provide some control against weeds while allowing you to seed your lawn and grow grass. Mesotrione, or sold under brand names Tenacity and Collisto, first hit the market in 2001 and offered consumers a method of pre and post-emergent weed control that won't kill new grass.

There's a lot of positives to be had with Mesotrione. The first is the obvious application for weed prevention during overseeding. It also can be used as either a post or pre-emergent, meaning you can use it to prevent weeds from growing, or to kill weeds that have already grown in your lawn. Finally, it's available in a stand-alone liquid that you can apply by itself or combined with granular starter fertilizer as a new "all-in-one".

Although Mesotrione has some awesome things going for it, you do need to watch out for a few negatives that come with using it. First, it doesn't prevent or kill as many types of weeds as other weed killers. Also, it is known to turn certain grass types a temporary lighter shade. When used as a pre-emergent, it has a significantly shorter control period than other common herbicides.

Ultimately you do have options for weed control during your overseed. Your focus during this time shouldn't be on aesthetics, rather it should be on getting the grass healthy and established. If you can wait until the grass is mature, or even the next season to tackle weed control, you will have better, cheaper options available to you and your time will be better spent elsewhere.

Fungus is an ever-present problem whenever there is moisture in your lawn. Since you will be watering the new seed constantly, you can expect a high probability that fungus will follow.

If you don't follow a regular fungicide routine, now is the time to do some research. For your overseeding project, pick up a bag of fungicide and apply at the preventative rate when you apply your seed and fertilizer. This should give you protection for the next 20 to 30 days.

ESTIMATED COSTS

So how much is this going to cost you? Sure, you want a nice lawn, but you also want to pay the mortgage.

For the average sized lawn, it won't cost that much. The great part is most of the expenses are for equipment that you will be able to use more than once.

Actual costs vary by area of the country, time of year, store promotions, quality of the product and if you are willing to bargain hunt. The prices listed below are just used as an example and represent prices from online retailers and big box stores at the beginning of 2021. They're rounded and don't include tax.

This will also be based on the amount of products you would need for a lawn the size of 5,000 square feet.

Irrigation:

- (2) 50-foot garden hoses.....\$32
- 2-Zone sprinkler timer.....\$45
- (2) Sprinklers.....\$55

Chemicals:

- Fungicide.....\$20
- Starter fertilizer.....\$25

Tools:

- Rake.....\$20
- Spreader.....\$35

Grass Seed:

- Jonathan Green Black Beauty
Ultra 25 pounds.....\$90

Optional:

- Dethatcher/Aerator rental.....\$100

Total:.....\$135 - \$450

Finally, the one remaining item that wasn't included in the cost estimate is the most important, your water bill. For those that aren't on municipal or public water and have a private well, this isn't a problem. However, for those that must pay a utility bill for their water supply, it's not going to be cheap.

There really isn't any reliable estimate that can be given for expenses for watering. Water costs will depend on what part of the country you live in, what your water rates are, if there are sewer fees attached to your water usage, how much rain you

get during the renovation process, and many other unknowns that are specific to each person.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND TIPS

- Enjoy your time in the lawn. Don't let the avalanche of online information and sales pitches overwhelm you. Just stick to the basics, have fun and everything will turn out just fine.
- Watering is the most important step. Remember, if it dries...it dies.
- Growing grass requires sun, soil and water. Everything else is either a sales pitch or optional.
- Nothing happens fast in lawn care. Everything is planning for next month, next season and even next year. There are no shortcuts or instant results.
- Read the labels. Read the instructions.
- Follow the labels. Follow the instructions.
- Listen to advice from reliable sources, not the comment section from Facebook or YouTube. When in doubt, the best resource for reliable and accurate information is your local University Extension or Turf Program. Just search online for their website and they will usually provide an extensive library of guides, articles, and resources to the public specific to their geographic region.
- Plan ahead. If there looks like there will be water restrictions in your area due to drought, then it's probably not the best time to undertake this type of project. If you're going on vacation for 3 weeks, not a good idea to start overseeding.
- Store any left-over seed in a cool, dry place in a tight container.
- Did I mention to water? If it dries, it dies.

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