

GROUND PREPARATION

GUIDE #1

ESSENTIAL - MOW IT SHORT

In order to give the new seedlings the best conditions for germination and growth, you will have to mow your existing grass low. Mowing low allows the new seedlings to access light which is required for germination and growth. In addition to this it will make sure the seed has access to the soil and doesn't sit on the existing grass. Seed to soil contact is CRUCIAL for germination.

Try to cut to around 1 inch (2.5cm) in height for the best conditions. Remember you will not be able to mow the lawn until the new seed has established. Prevent scalping the existing grass by only cutting 1/3 of it off at a time. It may take a couple of cuts to get there.

ALWAYS BENEFICIAL - AERATION

Aeration can really turn a lawn around as it allows the lawn to access air, water and nutrients more freely. The lawn can then thrive and the root systems can develop further.

In addition to this, hollow-tining will reduce compaction in the soil which will improve any drainage issues which are common in new builds and clay soils.

The budget version of this is poking holes in your lawn with a garden fork (spiking). However, this doesn't reduce compaction as it is pushing the soil down and compacting it more.

What you ideally need is a hollow-tiner, either a machine or handheld. Hollow-tiners will pull cores out of the soil which is fantastic for creating channels for air, water and nutrients to flow through the rootzone more freely. Mechanical aerators will allow you to cover an area quicker and can be rented by the day from places like Hire Station.

It's a great idea to aerate your lawn frequently (once in spring and once in autumn) to keep everything healthy and moving as it should!

ALWAYS BENEFICIAL - TOPDRESSING

One of the main reasons overseeding can be unsuccessful is because the seed doesn't have enough contact with the soil like it would do when starting a lawn from scratch. Topdressing the lawn before seeding or mixing the seed with topdressing will help to make sure that the seed has

enough contact with the soil for germination. You can use a thin layer of topsoil, compost or a more sandy mix. Either topdress beforehand and rake the seed in or apply on top of the seed and compact gently for maximum contact. The benefits of topdressing also include:

Thatch prevention: Topdressing will cover the thatch in your lawn and allow the grass to re-root and become denser.

Drainage: Using a topdressing with a high percentage of sand will improve your soil composition for better drainage. However, if you have a heavy clay soil you should only topdress with organic matter such as topsoil or compost to break down the soil over time. If you do have drainage issues you will want to make sure you hollow-tine regularly as well.

Levelling: You can also use topdressing to raise areas of your lawn so that they are level before seeding. Simply apply in these areas, compact, then reapply until the desired level is achieved.

ONLY IF NEEDED - MOSS CONTROL

Moss control is essential if you have moss infestations in your lawn as they will compete with your grass for nutrients and spread over time. The control of moss is most frequently carried out with iron sulphate which has additional benefits to affecting moss. Iron sulphate produces a rapid green-up of turf and hardens turf which is both pleasing to the eye and helps the turf become more resilient.

To control moss, dissolve and apply iron sulphate in water in the correct proportions for your lawn size. Dissolve 5g per 500ml of water per SQM in a watering can with a fine rose head, or 5g per 125ml of water per SQM in a pressure sprayer (for the most even spread).

Once this has been applied and the moss has turned black in 7-14 days you should rake it out using a spring tine rake. An easier way to extract the dead moss is using a mechanical scarifier which will remove thatch at the same time. If your lawn already consists of high thatch levels prior to moss control you may wish to scarify first for effectiveness.

Repeat applications may be necessary for larger infestations as it is unlikely all the moss spores will be removed.

Please be careful about getting iron sulphate on any patios, inside your home or on your clothes as it stains hard surfaces very easily. If this happens, wash and scrub surface immediately. For this reason we also recommend to keep pets and children off the lawn for at least 24 hours.

ONLY IF NEEDED - WEED CONTROL

Keeping on top of the weed population is important for your lawn to thrive as weeds will compete with your turf for sunlight, nutrients and water. On top of that they can be very unsightly!

Common lawn weeds include: daisy, clover, dandelion, buttercup and plantain. Weeds which are more difficult to get rid of in lawns and that are more likely to require repeat application include: speedwell, lesser

celandine, trefoil, yarrow and self-heal.

You will need to pull weeds manually or apply a quality selective (so you don't kill the grass!) herbicide to your lawn and be sure to take care as weed controls are usually harmful. Some weeds can be particularly hardy and may require repeat application.

Weedol for Lawns is one product you can look at for controlling any weed populations. Please check manufacturer's guidelines for how long you have to wait before you can seed after applying weed control. For Weedol for Lawns, 8 weeks is recommended. Keeping a well maintained and healthy lawn will help to prevent weeds from growing in the future.

ONLY IF NEEDED - SCARIFICATION

Scarification is for removal of excess thatch in your lawn or can be used when you have a lot of blackened moss to extract.

Thatch is a layer of dead material in between the soil and your grass. You can tell when there is an excess layer through visual inspection and when the grass feels spongy to walk on. A small layer of thatch is fine and can go untreated.

Removing excess thatch, like aerating your lawn, will allow your grass to access air, water and nutrients more freely and therefore improve overall health and growth levels.

You can scarify using a spring tine rake or using a mechanical scarifier. A mechanical scarifier is quicker and more effective and can be rented for the day from places like Hire Station or purchased from somewhere such as Screwfix. When you're scarifying make sure to do 2 passes of your lawn in different directions for maximum effectiveness and rake up and dispose of everything you get out of it.

ONLY IF NEEDED - RAKE OUT DEAD GRASS/BARE PATCHES

If the grass has been scorched through fertiliser misuse or pet urine or if it has been dead for a long time you need to rake it out. If your lawn has been burnt by the sun in periods of drought then most of the time it will become green again through watering/rain.

Rake out the scorched areas fully to leave only exposed soil before seeding. You can then rake the seed in gently to the soil. In particularly bad cases you can scarify the entire lawn on a deep setting to extract all the dead grass.

If you simply have bare patches or thin areas then loosen the top layer of soil so the seed can be raked into it for maximum seed to soil contact.

**SOMETHING NOT COVERED HERE OR YOU NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE?
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