

Ecology Lawn Planting Info

NICHOLS ECOLOGY LAWN MIX was blended with a picture in mind of old carefree English Herbal lawns. The advantages of a self maintained, low upkeep and herbaceous lawn are obvious, but don't be misled into thinking that no care is needed. Instructions for planting will follow, but first an idea of what to expect. The components of this mix were chosen for their similar textures and growth habits, as well as their ability to thrive in a variety of growing conditions. Part of the selection process included characteristics for low maintenance, resistance to thatch build up, ability to go without water once established and the self fertilization provided by the clovers. There is also a range of colors present in the blooms. Nemophila, or Baby Blue Eyes has an early showing of flowers with pale blue petals and white centers. The English Daisy buds start out a bright pink/red and open to white with yellow centers and will bloom all Spring through Fall when watered. The Roman Chamomile will bloom in midsummer and has small daisy like flowers that are predominately yellow with small white petals surrounding the centers. The Strawberry Clover has a pink bloom and the Dutch Clover's bloom is white. The Yarrow blooms once a year in midsummer. Its bloom is white and may be cut off if you are mowing very frequently (this presumes you would be irrigating regularly then). California Poppy has open vivid orange flowers, Pimpernel is a deep intense blue with 5 or 6 petals and a low spreading habit. Creeping Thyme has small fine leaves and dainty clusters of pink flowers.

CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES/TIPS The elements you need to consider when planting **our lawn mix** are the same as those for any other plant: light, moisture, temperature, oxygen and nutrient availability. Each Ecology mix is blended with varieties well adapted to specific regions. Furthermore each has components that perform well in shade, normal light conditions and intense sun, to provide a highly adaptive mixture for your growing environment. . The best times to seed are spring and fall when temperatures moderate. In general, the best time to plant a lawn from seed is when temperatures are favorable for rapid seed germination and grass growth. In the northern part of the United States, grass seed germination is optimum when the air temperature is between 60° and 85°F. Try to time your planting so there will be 6 to 8 weeks of good growing weather after seeding. The planting site must never dry out once seeded until germination occurs. Because conditions are so extremely variable we recommend that you check with your Extension Office for planting dates for your area.

Oxygen is reflected in the soil texture. Wet sticky soils do not have the "breathing room" needed for good root development. If your soil is of an undesirable texture, we recommend adding compost or aged organic matter, 4 to 6 inches in depth over the entire surface area. Adding organic matter to your soil is preferable to adding sand or sandy loam because organic matter breaks down to improve the tilth (texture) of your soil. Mixing sand with clay soil is like mixing gravel with cement to make concrete, you can easily make a bad situation worse.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANTING Plant on a well prepared seed bed. Over seeding onto an existing lawn will not produce the same results. If the old lawn has been neglected or overlooked for many years, chances are there is a significant thatch build up, which would prevent good establishment of this seed. Even though your lawn may look "thin" this may be the result of intense accumulations of thatch. You may also have many coarse textured grasses and weeds which would stick out like a sore thumb in this feathery textured mix. **Therefore, we must warn over seed at your own risk**

SOIL PREPARATION We recommend removing the old lawn or ground cover completely, by whichever method you choose. Keep in mind the fact that scalping may leave some roots which will reappear. After you have removed the old lawn amend the soil with compost or aged organic matter. Now is the time to apply it 4 to 6 inches deep then tilled in to amend 8 to 12 inches of top soil. Rake and level the soil so that it drains away from any buildings. Roll and pack the soil firmly enough that footprints show just faintly when you walk on it.

FERTILIZATION Fertilize the seed bed with a balanced mix of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium also know as N, P and K. This does not necessarily mean equal parts of each just that each element is present. All fertilizers are labeled with the percentages of N,P, and K on the front, shown as three numbers as in 8-12-8, Since you may choose a fertilizer with a different ratio, use the following method to determine how many pounds of fertilizer to apply. Read the label carefully to see how much Nitrogen is available. You want to apply 1.5 pounds of available Nitrogen per 1000 sq feet so divide 150 by the percent of available Nitrogen to get the number of pounds of fertilizer to apply per 1000 sq ft.

SEEDING Apply fertilizer and seed with a drop type spreader vs a broadcast type. This will insure even distribution which is especially important because the seeds in the mix are different sizes- this may also be the case with the fertilizer you choose. Apply the fertilizer first and then apply the seed. Use the spreader rating for the type of grass seed in your mix which for us was between 3 and 4. Afterwards, you may want to go over the area lightly with a rake but remember the seed is small so don't rake too deep.

WATERING As mentioned before don't let the newly seeded lawn dry out before it is well established. Use a sprinkler that provides good even coverage without washing away the seed before it is rooted. In our climate seeding in the Fall allows you to irrigate just until the fall rains start. By Spring the lawn will be well enough established so that you can let it go without water if you like. Under non irrigated conditions, you can expect to see a stronger impression by the Yarrow and Clovers. The grass may go dormant until the rain starts again. With regular irrigation your lawn will be green and have more blooms present. Again it is better to water for a longer period of time at less frequent intervals, than to water lightly more often.

MOWING The Northern Ecology Lawn mix is basically a low growing mix that will reach a maximum height of 6 to 12 inches. Dryland mix will reach 12 to 18 inches if not mowed. Southland mix will reach 2 feet if not mowed, though one mowing a year and no additional irrigation once established should maintain it at customary height for a traditional type lawn. When the lawn is not mowed the Baby Blue Eyes will be more upright in growth and the Yarrow bloom will develop fully. Under mowed conditions plant density will increase as they grow more mat like. The lower growing species, Roman Chamomile, Creeping Thyme and Yarrow will also be more exposed, adding their feathery foliage to the show. Consider the information given above and your needs when you make the decision to mow or let it grow wild. When mowing it is better to lower the lawn height gradually, don't cut it back more than half its present height at a time. With regular mowing the clippings will be smaller and can be left unnoticed on the lawn for a return to the nutrient supply.



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