



If your turf is looking a little worse for wear, you aren't alone. There is still hope for a lush green lawn yet this year. Just a few simple steps will help to get a lawn that will make the neighbors jealous.

If your lawn has suffered some damage this year, the type of turfgrass in the lawn and the extent of the damage will make a difference in its management. Moderately thinned lawns will have smaller than softball-sized thinned 'holes' in Kentucky bluegrass lawns or baseball sized holes in tall fescue lawns. Aggressive fall fertilization and broadleaf weed control in late September through October should improve moderately thinned lawns. For lawns that have larger areas of thinning turf, aerification and possibly power raking followed by overseeding will help to reestablish the turf in those thinned areas. Fall fertilization and weed control is also a good idea for further improvement. Lawns that are severely damaged or have had issues for quite some time, can be started over with a complete renovation. A complete renovation can include regrading of the site, tilling, or possibly incorporating organic matter followed by reseeding.

Fall fertilization helps encourage new growth in cool season turfgrasses. New vegetative growth, like tillers, rhizomes, and stolons, will help fill in those thin areas left behind by disease or summer stress and increase density of the turf. Root production and 'food' stored in the plant's crown is also encouraged by fall fertilization. A turfgrass that has ample stored food reserves will be better able to survive winters' stresses. For Kentucky bluegrass, the best time to fertilize is between the beginning and middle of September. Try to apply between 1.5 to 2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. For tall fescue lawns, fertilizing can be done the middle of August through the first week of September. Apply 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. A slow release fertilizer is recommended for both turfgrasses. This will feed the lawn slowly through the rest of the growing season and will keep you from having one single flush of growth all at once.

There is still time yet this fall to have the full lush lawn you are looking for. Overseeding a lawn will help to fill in the empty spots and create a full lawn yet this fall. Overseeding with a blend of different cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue can give you increased disease resistance, especially if you have an older cultivar. The blend allows some of the cultivars to thrive while others may be more susceptible to turf diseases. This prevents the putting all your eggs into one basket approach. The rule of thumb is that for each week grasses are seeded before Labor Day, development is speeded up by two weeks. The optimal window to seed cool-season turfgrasses is August 15 to September 15. Thin stands of Kentucky bluegrass should be overseeded with improved cultivars at .75 to 1 pound of seed per 1,000 square foot. If you are overseeding a tall fescue lawn, use a blend of improved turf-type tall fescue cultivars at a rate of 4 to 6 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet. Ensure the seed has good seed to soil contact and irrigate frequently for the best germination. Or take advantage of the holes caused by core aeration and overseed at the same time. The seeds that fall into the aeration holes are in the perfect environment to start sprouting and growing.

Keep in mind when seeding turf, not to apply a preemergence herbicide at the same time. Thin stands of Kentucky bluegrass should be overseeded with improved cultivars at .75 to 1 pound of seed per 1,000 square foot. If you are overseeding a tall fescue lawn, use a blend of improved turf-type tall fescue cultivars at a rate of 4 to 6 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet. Ensure the seed has good seed to soil contact and irrigate frequently for the best germination.

With a little seed, water, and some time, your lawn will grow from a disaster to picture perfect in no time.

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