

## *Success Tip...*

### **New Lawn Care**

Seeding a new lawn can be done in spring or fall, although fall is the absolute best. If necessary, summer seeding can be done as long as you can keep the area you've seeded moist at all times. Grass seed can also be sown in late winter.

**Preparing the Seed Bed**

For New Lawns:

Rake and grade the area fairly smooth. Remove rocks, twigs, and construction debris.

#### **Renovating Established Lawns:**

First mow the existing grass as short as possible. If you simply need to over seed or to reseed bare spots, rake the areas so they are crumbly, then skip to the 'Fertilizing' section.

Spray with ROUNDUP following label directions.

Wait 7-10 days for the vegetation to brown and then proceed with the raking out process. Use a thatching rake or a stiff garden rake to remove all thatch and other loose vegetation. It is not necessary to remove the dead grass. It is necessary to prepare the soil so that the grass seed will make contact with the soil when it is planted.

If there are any bare spots, chop the soil 2" deep leaving the clods between golf ball and marble size. You can rent a slicer which will make preparing the soil for larger areas much easier. Run the slicer East and West and then North and South to create a grid pattern. On a hillside, run the slicer horizontally across the slope. **DO NOT ROTOTILL!** If you do you will turn over thousands of weed seeds that will be happy to grow all over your lawn.

#### **Fertilizing**

Now you are ready to apply your fertilizer. Use a low nitrogen formula such as 11-22-22, which is best applied with a broadcast spreader. A drop spreader can be used, but be careful not to over apply.

#### **Seeding**

Our Natorp garden experts will be happy to assist you in making the right seed choice for your yard. Seed can be applied by hand, which is fine for bare spots, or with a spreader, which is best for larger areas. It is extremely important for the seed to make soil contact. It simply will not grow if it doesn't.

#### **Straw**

At this time, a light covering of straw can be applied. Although straw is optional, it does help keep the area moist, which is essential to seed germination. One bale of straw should cover between 750 to 1,000 square feet. You should be able to see 50% soil and 50% seed. When straw is applied correctly it does not need to be removed later on.

#### **Water**

Grass seed must be kept moist until it germinates. Water thoroughly. At first provide fairly short, but frequent watering. As the seed begins to germinate, you will not need to water as often, but remember not to let the seeded areas dry out for long periods of time. Try to water early in the day or early in the evening.

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## *Success Tip continued ...*

### **Mowing**

When the new grass is 3"- 4" tall it is time to mow. Set your mower at a mowing height of 2.5" to 3" high. Cutting the lawn high is a good natural weed control, as cooler soil temperatures discourage weed seed germination. Mow often. The more cuttings you make, the faster the new lawn will mature. Mow as late into the fall as necessary. Your last cutting of the season should be 1.5"- 2" high. This will help prevent lawn disease. Remember to rake up as many leaves as possible before the ground freezes. Leaves left on the ground will smother the grass trying to live beneath it, which means you'll have new bare spots in the spring.

### **Weeds**

After you have mowed the new lawn at least three times it should be safe to apply a weed killer if weeds are a problem. Be sure to follow label directions for the product you are using and be sure to use a product that will eliminate the type of weeds you have.

### **Winter Seeding**

If you cannot seed in the spring or fall, you may seed in late January or early February. Remove any twigs and leaves in the areas to be seeded. Apply your seed to those areas. The freezing and thawing soil will create a natural seed bed. Be aware that the success of winter seeding depends on our weather.

