

# Morrison Ranch Fall Over-seeding Methods and Techniques

This information is provided to us by West Coast Turf.

## Fall Overseeding

### When to Overseed:

Overseed established bermuda lawns from mid-October through mid-November. Temperatures should be less than 65F at night on a consistent basis or less than 78-83 during the day. It is not recommended to overseed a bermuda lawn until it has been established for at least 3 months, allowing rhizomes to fully mature.

### Winter Lawn Varieties

We choose **Perennial** ryegrass for winter overseeding of bermuda lawns. Perennial is preferred over annual ryegrass because it establishes quickly, is heartier, the blades are darker green and finer, and it is a lot easier to mow. Annual ryegrass is more likely to stain clothing and walkways, and can be difficult to mow.

We only use premium quality **Perennial** ryegrass seed.

### Before Overseeding Your Lawn

Do not fertilize for 4 to 6 weeks before overseeding, cut the watering frequency in half. Then stop mowing the lawn 7 days before overseeding. This is a good time for light dethatching if needed. Set the verticutter/mower so the blades are 1/4 inch above the soil and only open the canopy enough to allow the seed to make contact with the soil. Do not "dig" into the soil or heavily dethatch, it will damage the bermuda next spring.

### On The Day Of Overseeding:

1. Scalp down the lawn by mowing 3 times. First cut at the next lower height once more. Collect the clippings of each mowing. If using a reel mower, seed between the second and third mowings. On the third mowing, remove the catcher allowing the clippings to remain over the seed as the mulch.
2. For each 1,000 square feet of lawn area use 10 to 15 pounds of seed for perennial rye.
3. Divide the seed into two lots. Using a broadcast spreader or a drop spreader, spread one lot across the area in rows then spread the second lot at right angles to create a crisscross pattern. Rake or drag to ensure the seed makes contact with the soil. Save some of the seed to re-seed any thin or bare areas after two weeks.
4. Cover the seed with no more than 1/4 inch of weed and salt-free material such as composted steer manure, forest mulch, or the uncollected clippings of the third mowing(Step1). Top dressing helps retain moisture and moderates temperature for seed germination (helpful if cool temperatures come early). Some people have had success without top dressing during years with moderate weather.

## Watering

Usually watering 4-6 times a day for 2-4 minutes is adequate. It is important to keep the seed damp until it germinates which should take about 7 days. When the grass is 1 inch high water once a day. After the second mowing, water as needed. Once the lawn is established, depending on temperature, wind, rain, and soil conditions, water every other week or as often as 2 to 3 times per week. Water only enough to avoid wilt between waterings.

**Example:** water everyday, cycle time of 3 minutes (cycle time is based on a fixed spray sprinkler head), six start times (7am, 9am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm, 5pm) This example demonstrates a grow in schedule when day time temperatures exceed 90 degrees. Eliminate 7am start time when day time temperatures fall below 90 degrees.

## Mowing

When the grass is about 3 inches high (about 3 weeks after overseeding), mow to a height of 2 inches. **Perennial** rye can be mowed lower, but it is best to allow the grass to become established before closer mowing or seedlings may pull out. Use sharp mowing blades and do not mow when the lawn is wet. However, during extended rainy weather it is better to mow wet grass than to let it get too tall.

## Fertilizing

Fertilize with a 16-20-0 or lawn starter fertilizer after the first mowing. Be sure to water in the fertilizer. Don't fertilize too early or the bermuda may compete with the rye, but don't wait too long or the rye seed may die. After your winter lawn is established, fertilize every 4-6 weeks using a balanced fertilizer such as a blend of 21-7-14.