

A NOTE FROM VINTAGE LANDSCAPING

TREES AND SHRUBS

Generally trees and shrubs need a good soaking every 3-5 days. This means either 3-4 gallons of water or a nice soaking rain for trees and 1 gallon for plants but use your discretion. Also keep in mind that during a new plants first few months it is dependent on you to keep it moist until it has had time to send roots out into the native soil.

OK LETS TALK ABOUT LAWNS

All of the lawns planted here in PA are considered cool season grasses. Perennial ryegrass, Bluegrass and Turf type Tall Fescue being the 3 most common. Every packaged seed that the industry sells will be a blend of varieties. These different types of varieties all have attributes and benefits that complement each other. One simple example; Bluegrass is a great lawn but is really slow to germinate and to establish. If it is blended with perennial ryegrass this helps to compliment this slowness. Your new lawn will take between 6 and 18 months to become properly established. Understand that it really needs 2 good growing seasons. The Spring and the Fall are both a growing season. The Summer and Winter both force your new lawn to go dormant and into survival mode. These are not considered growing seasons. So for this reason it's logical that a lawn planted in the fall will have both the fall and spring growing season to become established before it needs to face and survive its first summer season. The other logical conclusion is that a lawn planted in May has only weeks to prepare for summer while a lawn planted in early April has a longer time to become established. However, by the time that a Spring lawn comes through the difficulty of the whole summer, the few extra weeks the April Lawn had vs the May lawn becomes irrelevant. What becomes more important are things like temperature, native soil conditions, weed pressures and general moisture. Most of these things are not in your control.

So lets review some of the general things a new lawn needs.

1. The lawn is always good to keep moist but not possible all spring and summer. Use wisdom.
2. Mow the lawn as soon as it is high enough.....this is generally good for new grass to keep it mowed as it will help the grass develop a lower growth pattern. Again use wisdom.
3. Any mulch used to protect the lawn is biodegradable and can be left in place. Any straw netting can be left to rot on its own or it can be pulled up if it is bothering you.
4. Stable soil. New construction does not lend itself to producing stable and healthy topsoil. Even though your builder spreads plenty of topsoil back in place for you, this soil is void of the organisms and life (like earthworms) it needs to promote healthy grass. The soil is often compacted as well. Time is the best solution for these issues and this is why the first year or two the lawn needs extra special care.
4. FERTILIZER - new grass should be fed at least 5 times a year. Remember the soil is not stable yet. Some of these applications can be included with weed control when this is appropriate.

We will fertilize the lawn when we install it. This will last 30 -60 days. I say 60 because we use a slow release product. My recommendation is that you feed it 30-45 days after we seed. A general rule of thumb when you are buying fertilizer is to buy the more expensive options. The reason is that you are paying for a slow release product which is helpful in keeping the food available for extended periods and to keep from "burning" the new grass.

Feed it with discretion during summer because you don't want to burn it.

5. WEED CONTROL - this is a matter to discuss with your maintenance company. Crabgrass is the only real enemy the first year. (by the way, Fall lawns have very little weed pressures that Fall or the following Summer).

Crabgrass control on new lawns - Ask your maintenance company about crabgrass control on new lawns. There are some products like "tenacity" that are permitted to use on new and un-germinated grass. Applying this or similar products in the Spring and early Summer might be the difference of having any of your grass survive the summer.

Please be aware that with all Spring/Summer seeding of lawns your biggest challenge will be controlling crabgrass which is an annual weed that naturally germinates in your soil after the soil temperatures reach 55 degrees. On an established lawn you can apply a pre-emergent herbicide that keeps this and some other weeds from germinating, however, because you have a new lawn this is not as easy an option until your lawn is up and mowed once or more, but by then the crabgrass is most likely also growing and any control you apply is only partially effective. In the past several years there are new post emergent products like "tenacity" that can be applied by professionals and homeowners. This should be considered. In either case be sure to apply a second and third round of fertilizer every 30 days on new lawns.

LASTLY: because you are seeding in the Spring/Summer you need to understand that you or your lawn company should be prepared to overseed the lawn in September. Do not wait until next Spring. Fall season is best.

A couple quick facts about overseeding:

1. Apply new seed to an existing stand of grass or weeds and
2. To cover this new seed in some way, encouraging it to stay moist and germinate

1. Overseeding can be as simple as spreading additional seed in a broadcasting method over the existing grass. In fact if the existing grass is brown and dry from the summer drought this is a really good condition for overseeding. This broadcasting method is most effective if it is followed with a means of working the seed down into the existing lawn thatch. One really simple way of doing this is to spread the seed and then take a leaf rake over the area scratching the turf, which will shake the seed down to the soil. This will allow the existing turf to provide the desired protection for the new seed. This type of overseeding can be very helpful early Fall or early Spring.

2. A second method is just like the 1st but to apply herbicide to the lawn first. Doing the application of herbicide first will kill all the weeds and grass, then after 7 days this dead turf is a better receptor for the new seed and acts as an excellent cover of protection.

3. A third method is to use mechanical means. Something like a slice seeder, spike seeder, or aerator to open the soil. We don't encourage this method in the Spring because opening up your soil in the spring will encourage more crabgrass growth again.

4. Any of the above methods can be complimented by topdressing the project with a thin layer of compost or mushroom soil. Especially on patches where there's no dead vegetation to act as protection.

Vintage Landscaping does not operate a retail facility, however if you want to stop by for seed, fertilizer or crabgrass control we can help you. Please text or email us with your needs and we will direct you.

A better option is to go directly to Rohrer's Seeds at 2472 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602. They will have all the products mentioned in this letter.

I trust the above instructions were helpful to you as you tackle this project of growing a lawn. Do not be discouraged. Take a look at your neighbors and realize that good lawns are possible in your soil. It simple takes time, patience and care. A lot like raising kids!

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