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STARTING A NEW LAWN FROM SEED

- 1. Investigate the site.** Make sure the ground gently slopes (a minimum of 1%) away from your house to prevent water from entering the basement.
- 2. Modify the soil.** If the native soil is extremely rocky, compacted or poorly drained, you will need to make modifications. In poor quality soils, adding 4 to 6 inches of a loam and compost mix will be beneficial.
- 3. Apply lime** (if necessary). Lime is immobile in the soil and should be rototilled into the upper 4 to 6 inches of soil before seeding. An acidic soil will require the application of palletized lime to decrease the soil acidity. The presence of pine or oak trees is a good indicator of a naturally acidic soil.
- 4. Rototill**, or otherwise loosen soil and incorporate lime into the upper 6 inches of soil. Moist (not wet) soil rototills very well. Tilling dry soil will damage the soil structure.
- 5. Rake** and remove any large stones, sticks, or other debris visible on the soil surface. Smooth out the soil surface, knocking down any high spots and filling in any low ones.
- 6. Firm soil surface.** Rolling or watering helps settle the loosened soil.
- 7. Apply fertilizer.** Rake a starter-type fertilizer into the upper inch of soil to be sure that your new grass will receive the proper nutrients.
- 8. Seed.** Select a seed mixture containing improved varieties well suited to your lawn. Broadcast seed uniformly over the area using a drop or rotary spreader. Achieve uniformity by seeding in opposite directions after setting the spreader to deliver at $\frac{1}{2}$ the desired rate.
- 9. Rake.** Using very light pressure, rake the seed into the upper $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of soil. A spring rake works well for this. While some seeds will remain visible on the surface (birds do not eat enough seed to ruin a seeding), raking is more effective than burying the seed to deeply.
- 10. Control crabgrass.** (spring seedings). Unless prevented, crabgrass often predominates in a spring lawn seeding. Herbicides are available that stop crabgrass from germinating.

11. **Mulch** (optional). Apply weed-free straw (salt marsh hay) uniformly over the new seeding to conserve moisture and reduce erosion on sloping ground. Apply approximately 1 bale per 1000 square feet.
12. **Water**. Keep the soil surface moist to prevent the seeds from drying out. This often requires light (5-10 minutes), frequent (twice a day) watering for 2 to 4 weeks after seeding. After 4 weeks water once every other day for 10-20 minutes. Once the lawn has become established, (about 8 weeks) reduce watering to 1 inch per week. To water accurately, place a coffee can under your sprinkler and time how long it takes to fill up to 1 inch.