

Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



School of Agriculture
Virginia State University

Prince William County Office
8033 Ashton Avenue, Suite 105
Manassas, Virginia 20109
703/792/7747 Fax: 703/792/4630
master_gardener@pwc.gov.org

Three Options for Fall Lawn Renovation

Task	Overseeding Acceptable Turf	Minor Renovation (Less than 50% weeds or spot renovation)	Major Renovation (Greater than 50% weeds)
Test Soil	Obtain a soil test kit from the Extension office, and follow directions for sampling.		
Chemical Application (late August)	None	On patches where weeds exist, use Glyphosate, sold as Roundup or Kleenup, applied according to label directions. Remove dead vegetation.	Glyphosate, sold as Roundup or Kleenup, applied according to label directions. Remove dead vegetation.
Preparing the Seed Bed (early September)	Following irrigation or a soaking rain, 2-3 passes with a core aerator	Following irrigation or a soaking rain, 2-3 passes with a core aerator. Rough up bare areas with a garden rake	Layer total amount of recommended lime, fertilizer, and any organic matter, before tilling to a depth of 4 - 6". Rake smooth and use a roller to ensure good seed to soil contact.
Addition of Organic Matter	Apply compost to a depth of 1/4 - 1/2"	Apply compost to a depth of 1/4 - 1/2"	
Liming	Apply lime according to soil test recommendations. If liming cannot be done at this time (your schedule doesn't permit it), lime can be applied anytime that the soil is not frozen.		
First Application of Fertilizer (August 15 - September 15)	Apply fertilizer as recommended in your soil test report or in your custom nutrient management plan		

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Task	Overseeding Acceptable Turf	Minor Renovation (Less than 50% weeds or spot renovation)	Major Renovation (Greater than 50% weeds)
Seeding (August 15 - September 15; possibly extended to October 15, depending on the continuance of warm weather)	Overseed at a minimum rate of 2 - 3 lbs/1000 sq. feet. Choose appropriate seed type according to Virginia Turfgrass Variety Recommendations	Same recommendations as previous column except on bare spots, which should be covered thoroughly.	Same recommendations as previous column except increase seed rate to a minimum 4-6 lbs/1000 sq. feet.
Watering	For all three options, maintain good moisture in the top 1/4 or 1/2 inch of soil. This will require several light waterings per day for 10 to 14 days after seeding when there is not adequate rainfall. The objective is not to allow the seedbed to dry out. Once the grass seedlings are up, apply 1/2 inch of water every 2 to 3 days, when rainfall is short, until the seedlings are well-established (normally 30 - 35 days after seeding).		
Mowing	Begin mowing as soon as your new grass is 3 to 4 inches tall. Mow with a sharp blade and never remove more than 1/3 of blade. Recycle clippings to return nutrients to soil.		
Second Application of Fertilizer (October 1 - November 1, or after first mowing)	Apply fertilizer according to recommendations on your soil test reports or in your custom nutrient management plan	None	

If You Still Can't Grow Grass...

Have you tried and still cannot get a good stand of turf? These guidelines should assist you in restoring or upgrading your lawn. Remember, there are areas in many yards where it is extremely difficult to grow grass. This is the result of many factors including heavy shade, poor drainage, steep slopes, etc. These areas may not be suitable for establishing a stand of grass. Feel free to contact us at the Horticulture Help Line at 703 792-7747 for assistance with these difficult areas, or for more appropriate plants to grow in these spots.

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