



# Starting a New Lawn



In Northeastern Ohio, late August through early October is the best time to renovate or simply improve your lawn because the soil is warm, air temperature is cooling, and fall rains begin. Late March through early May is the second best time. Follow the steps below for successful lawn improvements.

✓ **Study the site**

- **Measure** the area to calculate the materials needed.
- Is the area in **sun or shade**? Does **water drain** or does it get trapped and puddle in spots? Is it a **high traffic** or play area?
- **Do a pH test**. The ideal pH range for grass seed is **6.2 to 7.0**.

✓ **Prepare the site for a new lawn**

- **Remove all weeds and grass** with Roundup. Spray weekly until the weeds and grass are completely dead. This usually takes two weeks.
- **Add soil amendments**. If the pH is too low, add lime at the rate of 50 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. If the pH is too high, add soil sulfur at 20 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. Improve drainage with gypsum, compost, peat, or Espoma Soil Perfector.
- **Till the soil and amendments** to a depth of 2-4 inches. Level or **rough grade** the tilled soil with a hard rake. Fill in low areas. Slope soil away from buildings, and aim for 1 inch below sidewalks and driveway level.

OR **prepare the site for overseeding**

- **Remove all weeds** with Weed B Gon or Weed Beater Ultra. Spray weekly until the weeds are completely dead. This usually takes two weeks.
- **Mow the lawn closely** to a height of 2 inches.
- **Dethatch** or **aerate** the lawn if needed, or top dress with compost or Sweet Peet.
- **Add soil amendments**. Add lime or soil sulfur if needed as listed above.

✓ **Select grass seed**

- **Choose a lawn seed mixture** that matches the lawn situation. Sunny mixes are best for lawns with more than 6 hours of sun each day, and Shady mixes tolerate shade the best. Sun & Shade mixes are good for combination lawns or as an all-purpose mix. If the lawn gets a lot of foot traffic or is used by kids or pets, choose Hi Traffic or Black Beauty for sun, and Dura Shade for shady areas. High traffic mixes are also good for drought conditions. Purchase the correct amount for the area to be treated according to seeding rates on the label. Keep some extra on reserve in case heavy rains wash out certain areas.

✓ **Spread the grass seed** lightly and evenly, with care that seed does not get into flower beds.

- Apply **starter fertilizer**.
- Scotts Step 1 for Seeding is safe for new seed – other crabgrass preventers, including Scotts Step 1, will kill new grass seed.
- **New lawns - Cover** with straw or Sweet Peet no more than ¼ inch deep.

✓ **Water** the area thoroughly the first time to wet the soil deeply.

- Water lightly 1-4 times daily as needed, depending on the weather, to keep the soil continuously moist. Continue on this schedule until grass needs to be mowed.