

Overseeding your lawn

Overseeding a lawn is one of the quickest, easiest and cheapest ways to rejuvenate and thicken it. It also enables you to take advantage of the newer types of grass seed that are quick to establish, fine leaved and hard wearing, yet slow growing (so less mowing is required). If you overseed once or twice a year, you will gradually replace some of the older grass in your lawn, as well as giving the lawn a more immediate transformation.

What is overseeding?

Essentially, overseeding is the application of grass seed over an existing lawn. The seed is applied at roughly half the rate of that given for sowing a new lawn. It is one of the operations green keepers would do to keep golf courses and football pitches looking good throughout the year – so now you can use their secrets to greatly enhance the condition of your own lawn!

When is the best time to do it?

Overseeding can be done in the spring or autumn or both. It slots into the autumn lawncare regime more easily, but if your lawn is sparse and you want to get going in the spring, all you have to do is avoid putting a high nitrogen lawn fertilizer on until the seed is established. It would be better to opt for a product such as Lawnstart or Aftercut, which are lower in nitrogen and fine for new lawns.

Choosing the right grass seed

There are various types of grass seed and what is right for you will depend upon what you want out of your lawn. Unless you have a fine-leaved, 'luxury' lawn now that you tend lovingly and is not subjected to excessive wear and tear, it is probably best to opt for one of the newer types of grass seed, outlined above, that are slow growing, quick to establish and contain fine leaved varieties of rye grass, which are also hard-wearing. If your lawn either gets a lot of shade or suffers from drought, you could use a shade tolerant mix.

Preparing the lawn and applying the seed

Prior to overseeding scarify the lawn with a spring tine rake to give the seed something to settle into. (If overseeding in autumn, you would apply an autumn lawn food – with or without mosskiller – then scarify, before over-seeding). Then apply the seed at approximately half the rate recommended for sowing a new lawn.

Aftercare

If you wish, you can apply a top dressing immediately afterwards. This will help the seed to 'take' and generally improve the condition of the lawn. Top dressing is available bagged from garden centres – you simply apply a spadeful every square metre or so and brush it over the lawn surface.

In drier conditions make sure that the lawn is watered to assist germination and give the new grass a chance to develop before mowing. Mow with the blades set high for the first **couple of cuts**.