

Fungus in one's yard creates frustration. Today I offer hope. Allow me to share how to rid one's psyche of frustration and, at the same time, rid one's lawn of future fungus.

Three components must be present all at the same time for fungal diseases to prosper. They are the pathogen (disease-causing fungus), the susceptible host plant (grass), and the proper environmental conditions. Sadly, once turf grass is attacked by a fungal disease, that very same disease will likely reoccur in future years.

September provides the best opportunity to rid one's lawn of future fungal problems. Rather than using assorted fungicides and other costly chemicals; now is the ideal time to perform a cultural practice that establishes the best line of defense against fungi. The practice is called overseeding.

Overseeding can be defined as the planting of new grass seed directly into existing turf, without tearing up the turf. Overseeding fills in bare spots, improves the density of turf, and most importantly, establishes diversification. Through diversification a number of cultivars of like species are introduced to the lawn whereby creating a more disease-resistant lawn. With the onset of warm days and cool nights, expected rainfall and little competition from annual weeds, now is the ideal time of year to seed or overseed cool season grasses such as bluegrass.

Soil preparation is crucial when overseeding. Grass seed must make intimate contact with the soil for successful germination. Thoroughly rake the dead spots to remove dead grass and expose the soil. Apply and rake in a light application of starter fertilizer just prior to seeding.

Purchasing the proper grass seed is essential. Grass seed should be viewed as a long-term investment. The seed one buys and plants today will influence the quality and beauty of the lawn for years to come. Attempt to buy quality seed, such as certified seed. Being certified is a guarantee from the seller that you will get the kind and variety of lawn seed named on the label. Attempt to introduce a number of cultivars of like species thus creating diversification. Sow bluegrass seed at a ratio of 1 to 2 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet. Then, lightly rake

the area to insure good contact of the seed with the soil. It's always best to select varieties that have been tested and proven successful in Nebraska.

UNL Recommended Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars

Kentucky Bluegrass - Top Performing Cultivars (Not ranked)

Award	Bedazzled	Envicta	Midnight
Alexa	Blacksburg II	Everest	Midnight II
Arcadia	Bluestone	Freedom II	NuGlade
Ascot	Boutique	Glenmont	PP H 6366
A97-1409	Champagne	H92-203	PST-H6-150
A98-139	Chicago II	Impact	Quantum Leap
Arrow	Courtyard	Jefferson	Rambo
Barris	Diva	J-2885	Rugby II
BAR PP 0471	Eagleton	Kingfisher	Shamrock
Beyond	Excursion	Mallard	

Proper soil conditions are imperative for good germination. After planting, keep the soil surface moist for approximately thirty days. It takes bluegrass seed fourteen to thirty days to germinate. Light, frequent watering insures that the seed and soil will remain moist. During hot days, it may necessitate a number of waterings. If the soil dries during this process, the seedlings are likely to die. Once the seedlings have germinated and become established, water less frequently but more deeply to insure good root development. Keep in mind, although fungus is less apt to grow in autumn, it is still a good idea to avoid watering in the evening. In five to six weeks after planting, the new grass should be tall enough to mow. Avoid using herbicides if broadleaf weeds persist. Newly germinated grass seedlings can be harmed by herbicides. In this situation, it would be better to apply herbicides the following spring.

Overseeding, one's lawn in September, and doing so for three to four years in a row will most certainly create diversification. When that happens, one might safely say, "Farewell to future fungus problems and the personal frustration it creates."