

Last week I wrote about taking advantage of a window of opportunity. I indicated that an opportunistic window is currently open for one to either seed a new bluegrass or fescue lawn or to overseed an existing one— one that is in need of repair. In that particular column, I not only listed a step-by-step procedure in dry seeding a new lawn, but I also disclosed a number of reasons why this time of year is the ideal time to seed or overseed a cool-season lawn.



Today I'd like to share with you information regarding a relatively new procedure for seeding or reseeding a lawn. The process is called hydro-seeding. Keep in mind, I am not endorsing this method as a better method to that of the dry seeding method but rather as an alternative. Having recently observed contractor Brock Yant hydro-seed a yard, I quickly realized the many merits of hydro-seeding. Keep in mind, hydro-seeding takes special equipment and the skill

and professional knowledge of the contractor to complete the process.

Some of the major advantages of hydro-seeding include the following:

- Hydro-seeding costs a little more than the dry seeding method but generally less than sodding.
- When hydro-seeded, germination time is fast.
- Hydro-seeding can be tailored to provide the proper seed for the area involved. It is not uncommon for two or even three varieties of seeds to be used in the application. Many hydro-seeding contractors will use one seed for shady areas, one for high traffic areas, and one to create a front lawn centerpiece.
- Depending on the weather conditions and the time of year, hydro-seeded grass generally becomes visible in 5-7 days, a few days slower in cold weather or the hottest part of summer.

If you recall, last week I indicated that when dry seeding, germination time usually takes from two to three weeks.

The question now might be, “How does hydro-seeding work?”

Hydro-seeding in itself is a relatively simple process; but, in order to succeed, this is where the special equipment and a contractor’s professional knowledge and skill come into play.

Water, grass seed, fertilizer, protective mulch and a dye are mixed in a special tank. After being thoroughly mixed, this slurry is then sprayed onto the ground with special equipment.



The water in the mix is the key ingredient. When grass seed is in constant contact with water, germination time is given a jump start, and interestingly, most turf-type grass seed can be hydro-seeded. Liquid fertilizer is usually added to the mix. A high phosphorus starter fertilizer is generally used— one that stimulates root growth. The mulch used in hydro seeding is usually made from a paper or wood product. It helps protect the seed and seals in moisture thus speeding up the germination process. . Dyes are added to help the contractor know where the hydro-seed has been applied.

Other products can be added to a hydro-seeding mix such as a tackifiers. Tackifiers help seal moisture and hold the materials on a slope during rainy conditions

Other than for residential use, hydro-seeding is also popular for golf course construction, roadside work, as well as for commercial and industrial jobs.

Preparing the site for hydro-seeding is generally the same as for dry seeding; however, once the slurry is applied to the soil, a few days of special care is needed.

To assure proper germination, water the seeded area regularly—at least two to three times a day during warm weather. Keeping the yard moist is essential. An automatic watering system works ideally. In five to seven days the grass will begin growing. Mowing can begin once most of the new turf is three inches tall.

While the window of opportunity remains open for seeding a lawn, perhaps you might want to check out hydro-seeding. The hydro-seeding process I recently observed was performed by Brock Yant of Minden Lawn and Sprinkler, 402-290-9763.