



The Grass is Greener

Our family moved this summer to a new house with a yard that needs attention. LOTS of attention. Turning a space that was mostly dirt, weeds, and garbage into a workable, beautiful place for our family has been a great experience; certainly one that won't end this year. One of my favorite projects has been growing a lawn from seed, a route that has been cost effective and rewarding. Because autumn is the optimal time to plant grass (the little seeds aren't fond of the heat), I thought I would share things I learned along the way. Here are 5 easy steps to growing a lawn from seed.

1. Choosing Your seed

The best grass seed has multiple types of Kentucky blue grass, perennial rye, and creeping red fescue. Kentucky blue grass offers excellent winter hardiness and a dense dark-green lawn. Perennial rye is also important, with quick germination and heat and drought tolerance, along with creeping red fescue, also a quick germinator that fills in the shady spots. Stop by Joe's Greenhouse for a seed suitable for our area. New lawns only take about 3 lbs of grass seed

Joe's Greenhouse

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for every 1,000 sq. feet! Filling in a sparse lawn takes about 1-2 lbs for 1,000 sq. feet.

2. Clear and Prepare

After you have cleared and leveled the space (this might mean lots of weeding, raking, and weeding again, as it did for us), consider the quality of your soil. Sandy or clay-like soil may benefit from organic matter. Your secret weapon is probably peat moss, which will help retain moisture, a key part of getting new grass to grow.

3. Plant Gently

Put down about 1-2" of peat moss, then cover the area with grass seed. You may lightly cover the seed with peat moss, and then help the seed make contact with the soil. Rake or tamp down the seed. The idea here is to press the grass seed into the soil, not to bury it.

4. Water, water, water

Water in the seed, and be ready to water some more. One common roadblock for lawn success is forgetting to water the seed daily or twice daily in hot weather. The grass needs water regularly to germinate. Sensitive sprouts also need plenty of water as they're becoming established. Be prepared to keep the area moist for a couple of weeks while you're nurturing the infant sprouts into long blades.

5. Keep Going!

I watered our grass seed faithfully without any hint of growth for over a week. Then one morning...we had grass! Grass seeds are still sprouting, and by next spring we should have the velvety turf we envisioned. Story short: don't give up! Planting and watering grass seed may not bring immediate gratification but the end result is definitely satisfying a few weeks or a season later.

