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growing guide

Lawn/ Turf: Hardy Turf® Sod: The Instant Lawn

Hardy Turf® Sod is a very easy and successful way to create your dream lawn. It is a wise investment that provides you with a living carpet of green immediately after laying.

Advantages of Sod Over Seed

1. Unlike seed, sod is more easily and quickly established, providing a usable lawn in about a month's time.
2. Homes with a sodded lawn have an increased market value of 5% - 10%.
3. Sod grows in areas where seed cannot take hold, such as a slope.
4. Unlike seed, sod can be installed over the entire growing season (from early spring until the ground freezes in late fall or early winter).
5. Sod grows regardless of weather conditions.
6. It requires no special tools or expertise.

The successful installation and growth of your sod depends upon correct planting and follow-up care.

Soil Testing

Most soils in Illinois are well-suited for growing Kentucky Bluegrass. However, if your soil is poor, particularly if your "topsoil" is actually the subsoil from your basement that was spread over the yard following home construction, have it tested. This test will tell you if you need to amend the soil prior to laying sod. It's an ideal and practical time to improve your soil. These modifications might include changes in pH (turf prefers a slightly acidic soil with a pH of 6.0-7.0, consequently, never add lime without a test first), or additions of phosphorous, potassium, or organic matter.

Soil testing is done through
Mowers Soil Testing Plus, Inc.
117 E. Main Street
Toulon, IL 61483-0518

The charge for a basic soil test is \$20, and for a micronutrient soil test, \$26. You can send in the samples directly to *Mowers* or we, at Hoerr Nursery, can do it for you.

Site Preparation Remove Unwanted Vegetation or Impediments

All weed and other existing vegetation

should be killed with *Round-Up®* to ensure no undesirable growth develops with the new sod. After the initial spraying, wait seven days and respray any vegetation that shows normal growth. After three or more days following the second spraying, remove the dead and dying vegetation. Also remove anything, such as rocks or trash that would prohibit a solid weaving of the roots of the sod into the soil below.

Checking the Grade

Prior to laying sod is the best time to modify the grade of your site. Rolling a lawn will not remove undulations in a poorly graded lawn; therefore, be sure the soil is smooth. If your soil is heavy and compacted, rototill it. Otherwise, lay sod after removing the vegetation.

Fertilizer

Prior to laying new sod, spread *Fertilome's® Winterizer* or *New Lawn Starter®* on top of the soil. If you incorporated fertilizer into the soil when rototilling, this step is not necessary.

For lawns sodded before May 10, you may want to apply a Crabgrass Preventer. The sod itself is not prone to crabgrass invasion, but crabgrass seed can germinate from the existing subsoil. In addition, it is not unusual to see watergrass germinate, too. Watergrass is a thick bladed grass; as you begin mowing, the watergrass disappears.

Four to six weeks after the initial laying, begin normal lawn fertilizing practices for the current time of year. With sod, you can have the thickest, dark green carpet of mature grass in your neighborhood in a very short time. Pick up our "How to Guide for Lawn Care" to follow the proper procedures to ensure your lawn remains a luxurious, living, carpet of green.

Installation

Lay sod with edges close together, leaving no gaps between rolls. Avoid stretching or pulling sod while laying it, as this leads to "shrinkage" and gaps between rolls. Stagger the ends of the rolls, like bricks are laid on a house, to avoid the "lined up" effect. After laying, you can lightly roll the sod to assure good root/soil contact, although this is not usually necessary.

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On slopes or berms lay the rolls across the slope. This prevents water from running down the seams and preventing possible erosion. On steep slopes, secure the sod with "U-staples" or pegs to prevent slippage.

Irrigation

Watering your sod is the single most important step in successful sod establishment. Immediately after laying, saturate the sod and soil to the point it is too wet to walk on without leaving a depression. Water daily for the first week or two depending on prevailing weather conditions. During this period, overwatering will never be a problem. Under watering will lead to damage or loss of sod.

Continue to water sod periodically for several weeks. A rule-of-thumb is water daily for the first week or two, then every other day for one or two weeks, then every third day for one week, then every fourth day for a week and so on, until you are watering once per week. Continue to water once per week for the remainder of the season, which ends when the grass stops growing in the fall.

An exception is sod laid in late fall; although the grass blades are not growing, the roots continue growing until the soil freezes. Consequently, sod laid in late fall is watered until the ground freezes.

Mowing

Sod often requires mowing 7-10 days after laying. Let sod dry out enough to walk on it, and raise your lawnmower to the highest setting. You will not hurt sod by walking on it at this time. After mowing, water sod thoroughly. Following the initial cutting, gradually lower the cutting height and continue normal mowing practices.





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Lawn/ Turf: Lawn Seeding

By following the basic steps in starting a lawn with **seed**, you can have a sod quality lawn in 18 to 24 months. Follow these steps to success!

Spring Seeding Tips

The spring seeding window is from late March to mid-April, but establishing a good lawn with spring sowing is almost impossible due to the growth habits of turf-type grasses.

Fall is always the preferable season but sometimes you have no choice, so here are a few spring seeding tips from Purdue University:

- Seed as soon as possible so the seed is in the ground and ready to germinate as soon as the soil temperatures rise.
- Improve the seed-to-soil contact by raking the soil before seeding. After seeding, a light raking will push the seed into better contact with soil.
- Water lightly to keep the seed bed moist as soil temperatures warm to 50° and the seed starts to germinate.
- Avoid any herbicide applications to the seeded areas until the seedlings are established and mowed at least 3 or 4 times (this might be May or later depending on the weather).
- Since the seedlings will not develop a good root system until fall, keep newly seeded areas well-watered all summer.

Soil Testing may not be necessary if you have black or dark brown topsoil but many homes built today have their topsoil covered by the excavated basement soil or stripped away during construction. Consequently, to ensure your lawn's success, have it tested three to four weeks prior to seeding. Send soil samples to:

Mowers Soil Testing Plus
117 E. Main St.
Toulon, IL 61483
(309) 286-2761, or
(800) 354-8197

Or you can bring your samples to the Garden Center and we can send the sample to the testing lab for you.

The soil test report will indicate what adjustments you need to make to the soil. *Weed Removal* is needed to eliminate competition with the tender seedlings. To control existing perennial weeds (for

example, quackgrass, dandelion) which can grow back from small pieces of root, spray *unwanted* vegetation with Round-up (glyphosate) or Finale. Wait ten days prior to cultivation to ensure complete kill and retreat if necessary. If it is necessary to respray, wait 3 to 7 days to cultivate.

To prevent annual weeds such as crabgrass, foxtail and seedling broadleaf weeds, apply Scott's Step 1 for Seeding containing Siduron®, a pre-emergent herbicide that prevents the germination of annual weed but has no effect on perennial turfgrass seed. Siduron® allows immediate seeding after application.

Soil Fertility is amended according to the soil test. If phosphorous or potassium is needed, incorporate it into the soil. Since turf prefers slightly acidic conditions, any lime or sulfur is better incorporated into the soil and only as indicated by a soil test. Adding these without incorporation greatly reduces their effectiveness. *Do not apply lime to a lawn without first having the soil tested.* Add nitrogen after seeding, using a starter fertilizer or regular lawn fertilizer without herbicides. If a soil test is not taken, incorporate two pounds per 100 square feet of an all-purpose fertilizer such as Fertilome's Gardener's Special.

Soil Modification isn't economically feasible for large lawns, but it can make a significant difference in the turf's performance on poor soils. Compost, sphagnum peat, and manure can all be used as amendments. By adding these to clay or sandy soils, you'll improve the grasses' chance to root deeply, take up nutrients, resist diseases, and be dense and dark green.

Grade to create a level final grade before seeding. Rolling never sufficiently reduces bumps or mounds and damages the soil's structure. The level and slope are determined by the quality of rough grading. So, move soil where you need it or add or remove as required. One ton of topsoil covers about 300 sq. ft. at a one-inch depth. Add enough soil along the foundation to give a 2 - 3% slope away from the house.

Rototill or cultivate fertilizers and amendments to a six-inch depth to loosen compacted soil. The soil should not be powder-fine, pea-sized soil particles are best.

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a drop spreader or calibrated cyclone-type spreader make two passes, one perpendicular to the other, over the entire lawn at half the rate that would be used if sowing once in one direction. Then lightly rake the entire area covering the seed no more than **1/8 to 1/4** inch. A very light rolling with a roller **1/4 to 1/2** full of water or even walking over smaller areas will help to ensure good seed to soil contact without damaging the soil's structure.

It is very important with seeding to get seed to soil contact. Broadcasting seed without working up the soil yields very poor results.

Mulching the new seeding with straw hastens germination and protects the young seedlings from the sun and heavy rains. When using straw, apply water immediately to prevent it from blowing away. On slopes, mulch reduces erosion; use erosion net, excelsior, burlap, or seed germination fabric.

Wheat straw contains fewer weed seeds than oat straw. The new, white seed germination fabrics create optimum growing conditions; following germination, remove it and reuse it. Anchor the fabric with "U" staples.

Watering is the critical aspect of seeding because too much or too little alters the success and the seedlings are most vulnerable to drying winds and temps immediately after germination.

Unfortunately many people stop watering too soon. Too little water after germination is the chief cause of failure.

Apply $\frac{1}{4}$ " of water in a fine spray once per day; twice per day is ideal, while avoiding standing water and puddling. More frequent watering is necessary in hot and windy weather. Maintain watering daily until all seed germinates and until the second mowing. Bluegrass germinates in four to six weeks, the longest for turfgrass seed.

As an alternative, check into purchasing our legendary Hardy Turf® sod for an instant lawn!





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Lawn/ Turf: Lawn Establishment

Lawn establishment is a "grass roots movement". In other words, your lawn will never be any better than the soil it roots in to. We recommend having your soil tested before planting so you can take corrective measures first, for better results later. The black or dark brown topsoils of Illinois usually yield pretty good results without testing. However, many of the homes built today have their topsoil stripped away, or covered by the poor subsoil excavated during basement installation. To ensure your lawn's success, have it tested three to four weeks prior to doing the work. Soil modifications and some fertilizations are done before working up the soil. (See Growing Guide: Soil Testing for more information)

Weed removal is necessary to avoid any competition with the tender seedlings. To control perennial weeds (quackgrass and dandelion) which can grow back from small pieces of root, spray unwanted vegetation with Round-up (glyphosate). Wait 10 days before cultivating to ensure complete kill. If necessary to retreat, spray and then wait 3-7 days to cultivate.

Soil modification may not be economically feasible for large lawns, although it can make a significant difference in the turf's performance. Compost, sphagnum peat, and manure can all be used as amendments. By adding these to clay or sandy soils, you can improve the grasses' chance to root deeply, take up nutrients, resist diseases, and be dense and dark green.

Soil fertility is amended according to the soil test recommendations. If phosphorous or potassium is needed, they should be incorporated into the soil. Likewise sulphur (which creates the acidic soil that turfgrass loves) should also be worked in. Adding these without incorporation greatly reduces their effectiveness. Contrary to common practice, do not apply lime to a lawn without first having the soil tested. Add nitrogen after seeding, using a starter fertilizer or regular lawn fertilizer without herbicides.

Create a level lawn grade before seeding. The better job you do then, the more satisfied you'll be in a couple of years. Rolling the lawn never sufficiently reduces bumps or mounds and actually damages the

soil's structure. First do a rough grade of the lawn to make it level and properly sloped. Add or relocate soil as required. (If bringing in topsoil, one ton of topsoil covers about 300 sq. ft. at one-inch deep.) Be sure to add enough soil along the foundation to give a 2 - 3% slope away from the house. If you have time, it's actually best to allow the grade to settle a season before installing the lawn.

Apply any fertilizers or soil amendments to the rough grade, and cultivate a six-inch depth. This loosens compacted soil for easier turfgrass establishment. The soil should not be powder-fine, rather pea-sized soil particles are best. Now finish the lawn base with a final grade.

Seeding is done after final grading. Use a drop spreader for even seed distribution. With the spreader set at half rate, make two passes over the entire lawn, the second perpendicular to the first. Following seeding, lightly rake the entire area to stir the seed into the soil. The seed should be covered no more than 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. A light rolling with a roller (1/4 to 1/2) full of water will help to ensure good seed to soil contact, without damaging the soil's structure.

Mulching the new seeding with straw hastens germination and protects the young seedlings from the heat stress and heavy rains. Wet the straw down to prevent it from blowing away. On slopes, mulch also reduces erosion. Use products like erosionnet, excelsior blanket or burlap. The new, white seed germination fabrics create optimum growing conditions; following germination, remove it and reuse it. Anchor the fabric with "U" staples.

Watering is critical for seed germination: too much or too little alters the success. More lawns fail because of underwatering than overwatering. Ideally, keep the top soil layer evenly moist by applying a minimum of 1/4" of water once per day (twice per day is ideal). Avoid applying too much water at a time which creates puddles. More frequent watering is necessary in hot and windy weather. Maintain watering daily until all seed varieties germinate and establishes, until the second or third mowing. Bluegrass germinates in four to six weeks, the longest for turfgrass seed.



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Lawn/ Turf: Lawn Care Calendar

Spring MARCH

- As the snow melts you may see meandering trails in your lawn & garden beds. These were made by meadow mice (voles) feeding under the snow. Don't worry about them. The turf will repair itself in a few weeks.
- When we get a nice, sunny day, remove winter's debris with a soft rake.

APRIL

- Pre-mergence crabgrass control should be put down in early to mid April. We like to use Tax Day as our 'marker'. Another good indicator is when the forsythias & dandelions bloom. This is the first, and perhaps the most important, step in any lawn care program. If you don't control crabgrass now you're asking for trouble this summer. It's also the initial application in the 4-step program.
- Once your lawn is actively growing you can, if absolutely necessary, aerate & dethatch. But it's much better to do it in the fall because the turf recovers quicker when the temp. is over 70° and the soil is warm.
- Seeding may be done at this time but if you're applying crabgrass control be careful what kind you use. Some products prevent all grass seeds from germinating, weed grass & desirable grass. If you are seeding and want to control the annual weedy grasses too we strongly recommend Hi-Yield Crabgrass Preventer with Tupersan®. Sodding with our locally grown sod can be done at anytime!

MAY

- Fertilize this month at a rate of about 1# of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. of lawn. For instance, a 40 pound bag of Fertilome Lawn Food Plus Iron contains 28% nitrogen, 11.20 pounds. The recommended area of coverage is 10,000 sq. ft., so you would be applying 1.12 pounds of actual N. (This is all worked out on the bags, so we

don't have to worry about doing the math!)

- You can combine the fertilization with a post emergence (after they're up) broadleaf weed control, usually the second step in a four step lawn care program. If dandelions are the target, excellent control occurs when they are treated in the 'puffball' stage.
- In case you missed it, you can aerate and/or dethatch. (But fall is still better.)
- The cool moist weather of spring is ideal for some diseases, so keep an eye out for problems.
- Do a soil test before adding lime or any other soil amendments. This can be done anytime the soil is not frozen.

Summer JUNE

- In early June, fertilizer can be put down, but cool season grasses such as Kentucky blue & fescue, will go dormant in hot weather.
- If you still have dandelions, apply a weed killer early in the month but . . .
- Do not spray if it's over 80 degrees.
- Mow regularly 2 1/2" to 3" and sharpen the mower blades every 4th to 6th cutting.
- If it's dry & a green lawn is important to you then- Water, Water, Water!
- Watch for sod webworms & chinch bugs if it turns dry & hot.
- Leaf spot & brown patch can be a problem.

JULY

- Unless you're watering a lot your cool season grasses will go dormant. And if it's very hot & very dry and you are maintaining a lush, green lawn then you are over watering all of your non-grass plants.
- If you must water then apply at least 1 inch week! (It's much easier said than done.)
- Sharp mower blades are even more critical now.

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- Install sod any time throughout the summer as long as you aren't going to leave for a two week vacation the day after the job is complete.

AUGUST

- It's hot! Grab a cold drink & relax.
- From the last week of August thru mid-October is the best time to fill in bare spots or establish a complete new lawn from seed.
- If grubs have been a problem in the past they'll probably be back.

Autumn

SEPTEMBER

- Around Labor Day, apply a product such as Fertilome Lawn Food Plus Iron, the third step in a four step lawn program.
- When does Nature sow her seeds? In the fall. Take advantage of this cycle to fill in or establish your lawn from seed.
- Some folks apply lime in the autumn because it is worked into the soil by rain & the freezing and thawing of winter. But test your soil first!
- Now is a good time to aerate and dethatch. Your lawn will love you for it!

OCTOBER

- You can still aerate and dethatch.
- Control Chickweed, Creeping Charlie, & lots of weeds now! Apply Fertilome Prevent Plus Lawn Food. This can be the final step in the four step program.
- In the first half of the month, there's still time to you can still seed your lawn.
- Apply a winterizer any time from Halloween to Thanksgiving.

NOVEMBER

- Mow until the grass stops growing.
- Don't forget to drain all the gas out of the mower & string trimmer.
- Apply the winterizer before Thanksgiving.

DECEMBER

- If your bird feeders are over lawn areas, try to rake up the spilled seeds & hulls every few weeks.
- Enjoy the holidays!

JANUARY

- Right about now we start to long for the fragrance of fresh mown spring grass.

FEBRUARY

- As we wander around the lawn on those few nice days this month it's amazing how much the grass has actually grown over the winter!
- Now we're glad we applied the fertilizer in the fall.





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Lawn/Turf: Choosing the Right Grass Seed

Hoerr Nursery Turfgrass blends:

- Professional
- Emerald
- Shady

Hoerr Nursery's Custom Blended Turfgrass Mixtures Offer You:

- Over 80 years professional experience serving the landscape & lawn needs of Central Illinois
- Only the best, most compatible turfgrass varieties used in every mixture
- Our commitment to unsurpassed quality through constant evaluation and testing of new varieties

Recommended Seeding Rates:

- If your current coverage is less than 50%, total renovation or the **New Seeding Rate** is required.
- With coverage between 50-75% use the **Overseeding Rate**.
- 75% coverage needs to be spot seeded only. Use the **Overseeding Rate**.

We strongly recommend applying a new lawn starter fertilizer at seeding. It is specifically formulated to stimulate strong, vigorous root development.

Professional

Our most popular pure Kentucky bluegrass blend contains 25% of each of the following pure varieties: Blue-tastic, Midnight, Deep Blue, and Blue Sapphire. Our turf professionals selected these outstanding varieties for exceptional performance & disease resistance in our area.

New Seeding Rate	Overseeding Rate
2-4 pounds/ 1000 square feet	1-2 pounds/ 1000 square feet

Comments: Quality bluegrass requires 14-21 days to germinate depending upon weather & soil conditions. Your patience will be well rewarded with a lush, enviable lawn. For best results use in full sun areas only. Available in bag & bulk.

Emerald

Our best selling mix! A blend of 25% Frontier Perennial Ryegrass, 25% Darkstar II Perennial Ryegrass, 25% Deep Blue Kentucky Bluegrass, and 25% Creeping Red Fescue. We selected these cultivars for the reliable establishment of a lush, superior turf.


New Seeding Rate	Overseeding Rate
4-6 pounds/ 1000 square feet	2-3 pounds/ 1000 square feet

Comments: Produces a quality, all-purpose turf for the active outdoor family where tolerance to light to medium traffic is required. Thrives in full sun to partial shade. Available in bag & bulk.

Shady

Contains 5 cultivars of fine-bladed, shade tolerant grasses: 20% Frontier Perennial Ryegrass, 20% Harpoon Hard Fescue, 20% Deep Blue Kentucky Bluegrass, and 20% each Eugene and Boreal Creeping Red Fescue.

New Seeding Rate	Overseeding Rate
4-6 pounds/ 1000 square feet	2-3 pounds/ 1000 square feet

Comments: Though no turfgrass will thrive in less than 65% sunlight, Shady Superfine excels in partial to dappled shade & bright northern & eastern exposures. Available in bags & bulk. 

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Lawn/ Turf: Choosing Bagged Lawn Care Products

What You Want to Do	What to Use	More Info	When to use
Prevent crabgrass, foxtail, sandbur & barnyard grass (water grass) before it germinates in the lawn & fertilize at the same time	Ferti-lome Crabgrass Preventer & Lawn Food, contains Team, 20-3-3 plus trace elements or Ferti-lome Pre-Vent plus Lawn Food, contains Gallery & Team, 18-6-12	Apply Crabgrass Preventer around April 15 depending upon the weather. Pre-Vent is more effective in the very early spring, March to mid-April, and in the fall from mid-September to mid-October.	No later than May 1-10 depending on Spring temperatures.
Seed/overseed the lawn, stop crabgrass & other grassy weeds & fertilize at the same time	Hi-Yield Crabgrass Preventer plus Lawn Food, contains Tupersan, 15-5-10	Tupersan is a pre-emergence herbicide that targets annual grassy weeds but not perennials such as Kentucky Bluegrass, Perennial Rye, the Fescues or any of the perennial grasses commonly used in Central Illinois. It's the only lawn care pre-emergence product that can be applied at seeding at any time of the year. And the slow release nitrogen won't burn young grass roots.	No later than May 1-10 depending on Spring temperatures.
Seed/overseed or sod a lawn & fertilize at the same time	Fertilome New Lawn Starter, 9-13-7 with trace elements or Fertilome Start-n-Grow, 18-6-12 with trace elements	Fertilome New Lawn Starter is a must for new lawns, seed or sod. Can be applied with seed & before or after laying sod all year. Helps seedling/sod root & stem development before rapid growth.	At time of seeding
Stop various grassy & broadleaf weeds from germinating in the lawn & fertilize at the same time	Ferti-lome Pre-Vent plus Lawn Food, contains Gallery & Team, 18-6-12	The only turf pre-emergence product for controlling broadleaf & grassy weeds while fertilizing. Best applied in the early spring, March to mid-April, and in the fall from mid-September to mid-October. Controls chickweed & Creeping Charlie & other fall/winter germinating weeds.	No later than May 1. Apply at the end of March for maximum control
Apply a fast greening lawn fertilizer	Ferti-lome Lawn Food plus Iron, 28-4-4 with trace elements	A good all-around lawn food. Apply at any time during the growing season, especially effective in the fall. Contains two types of nitrogen for fast green-up & long term (4-6 weeks) feeding. Always water after application	6 weeks after crabgrass & fertilizer control, then late August and again six weeks later.

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<p>Fertilize & kill existing broadleaf weeds at the same time</p>	<p>Fertilome Weed Out plus Lawn Fertilizer, contains Trimec, 25-4-4 with trace elements</p>	<p>Trimec is a blend of 3 weed killers for excellent control of growing weeds. Best applied in mid to late spring or early to mid fall when weeds are actively growing. Lawn should be damp at application. Short & long-term nitrogen for extended (4-6 weeks) feeding.</p>	<p>Mid May Mid September Mid October</p>
<p>Fertilize the lawn for long-term feeding</p>	<p>Fertilome Classic Lawn Food, 16-4-8 with trace elements</p>	<p>Contains slow, slower & slowest release nitrogens for feeding up to 8 weeks. Environmentally friendly with natural sources of nitrogen & potash. Can be used at any time during the growing season and is the only product we recommend applying to non-irrigated turf in the summer.</p>	<p>Any time</p>
<p>Fertilize the lawn for very long-term feeding</p>	<p>Fertilome Start-n-Grow, 18-6-12 with trace elements</p>	<p>Formulated to provide 3-4 months of continuous feeding to lawns, new & established, and all other types of plant material. Will not harm young plants, can be used at seeding. Use at any time during the growing season.</p>	<p>Any time including seeding</p>
<p>Eliminate moss in the lawn & fertilize at the same time</p>	<p>Fertilome Classic Lawn Food plus Moss Control, 16-4-8 with sulphur & iron</p>	<p>Provides deep greening power & eliminates moss in the lawn. Apply at any time during the growing season. Water after applying & brush or rinse off any concrete areas to prevent staining from the high iron content.</p>	<p>Any time</p>
<p>Winterize the turf</p>	<p>Fertilome Winterizer, 10-5-14 with trace elements</p>	<p>An excellent fertilizer for turf, shrubs, trees, evergreens & roses. Can be applied spring or fall. Feeds turf for 4-6 weeks. Fall fertilization is the most important fertilizer application you can make.</p>	<p>November-early March</p>
<p>Apply a 100% organic fertilizer</p>	<p>Milorganite, 6-2-0</p>	<p>Milorganite is activated sewage sludge from Milwaukee & is rich in iron. It feeds slowly and is best applied around Memorial Day, Labor Day and again near Thanksgiving. Milorganite never 'burns' the turf & does not need watering in. Use at seeding/sodding, too. The metallic odor repels deer for a short time.</p>	<p>Memorial Day Labor Day Thanksgiving</p>



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Lawn/ Turf: The Easy 4 Step Lawn Care Program

Growing grass can be easy.

It sprouts from cracks in concrete or from the gutters of an abandoned house. Grass will grow just about anywhere and growing a lush, deep green, healthy turf is really only a matter of doing the right thing at the right time. But let's agree on a few of the basics about lawn care.

First premise: The "grass" we're talking about is, for the most part, either a fine-bladed cultivar of Kentucky Bluegrass, Red Fescue, Perennial Rye or a blend of two or more of these types, possibly containing a number of cultivars. (A cultivar is a horticultural variety selected for a specific characteristic, such as improved disease resistance, deeper color, finer leaf blade or anything that makes it more desirable over the common species.)

These most commonly used turf-type grasses are Cool Season Grasses. That means they grow during the spring and fall and naturally go dormant or slow their growth considerably during the heat and dryness of our typical summer.

Second premise: Grass is a heavy feeder. Makes sense doesn't it? Anything that grows that fast requires energy and producing that energy requires nutrients in heavy doses.

Third premise: Grass requires light to thrive. That means at least 70% bright light, if not full sun. Shade tolerant grasses are no exception. You can grow grass in shady locations only if the shade is bright. Like the shade from tall, airy trees for example. You cannot compensate for the lack of light with extra fertilizer, extra water or extra seed -- grass needs light.

Now that we've all agreed on the basic premises, here is our four-step, easy to remember strategy for maintaining turf-type lawn grasses.

With these steps you can Do-It-Yourself, or with the Lawn Fertilization program through Hoerr Nursery, you can contract for up to six steps for your lawn. Call: 309-691-4561 for more information.



What to Apply	When to Apply It	What It Does
STEP 1 Crabgrass Pre-venter plus Lawn Food	Tax Day: April 15th or approximately when Forsythia is in flower or when dandelions are in bloom.	This is an important application. The crabgrass preventer stops crabgrass and other annual weedy grasses from germinating while the fertilizer boosts your lawn out of the winter doldrums.
STEP 2 Weed-Out Plus Lawn Fertilizer	The best dandelion kill occurs when most of the dandelions are in the 'puffball' stage. If your lawn is fairly weed-free, then applying this product around Memorial Day is about right.	The weed control kills the broadleaf weeds while the fertilizer prepares the lawn for the summer. Apply when the turf is damp so the herbicide sticks to the weeds.
STEP 3 Lawn Food Plus Iron	Labor Day through September	Assists the turf in quickly recovering from the summer, preparing it for maximum growth during the fall. The late summer-fall applications are the most important fertilizer applications you'll make all year. The extra iron is a boost, too.
STEP 4 Winterizer	Anytime from mid-October (Halloween) thru November, even into December.	This is the most important fertilizer application you'll make. It not only helps the grass through the winter but it's the most efficient way to prevent a number of diseases next year.

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