



How to Grow Your Ryegrass Winter Lawn

1. Timing

You'll know that it's time to plant your ryegrass winter lawn once our night-time temperatures drop to 65° Fahrenheit—consistently, for about a week.

2. Thin the Grass

When preparing to plant your ryegrass, it's important to remember that your Bermuda grass will likely still be green in early October. In order to ensure that the ryegrass seeds make the soil contact they need to germinate and build your winter lawn you will have to thin out the current lawn. This is most easily done by lowering the blades on your lawn mower until you have cut the grass nearly to ground level. If your mower does not have a grass catcher, rake the lawn with a leaf rake to remove the clippings.

3. Apply the Seed

The next step is to apply the ryegrass seed over the relatively bare surface – between one and one-and-a-half pounds of seed per 100 square feet. You can distribute the seed by hand, or with a lawn seeder, and overlap areas to ensure complete coverage.

4. Apply Needed Nutrients

The gardening experts at SummerWinds recommend applying Ferti-lome New Lawn Starter Fertilizer. It contains urea formaldehyde, a source of nitrogen which is designed to feed your lawn for 6 to 8 weeks. Also contains muriate of potash, a source of soluble potassium and one of three primary plant nutrients.

5. Deter the Birds

After seeding is complete, apply seed cover – such as SummerWinds' Soil Conditioner & Seed Cover – or other organic mulch to lightly cover the seeds (do not use manure). This layer will help hide the grass seed from birds, and also keep the seeds moist between watering. Distribute the mulch evenly and to a depth of one-quarter inch over the entire seeded area.

6. Water - Little Water Resources Required

It is critical to keep the seed moist until it has germinated and developed a root system capable of picking up the water it needs to survive. Set your sprinklers to wet the entire lawn area lightly (2 to 3 minutes, or enough to wet the top 1-inch of soil) several times in the evening and early morning when evaporation rates are lowest to prevent the seeds from drying out. Water 3 to 5 times if you're using a seed cover and 6 to 7 if not. Also watch for puddles of standing water which can float the seeds and expose them to the air, birds or drying temperatures, or wash them into low-lying areas and cause your winter lawn to grow unevenly.

Once the seeds have germinated and the area has a noticeable tinge of green, you can cut watering back to once daily, and then once every other day. Do not mow your new lawn until the grass is at least three inches tall and remove the clippings after your first mowing. It can take up to three weeks before your winter lawn of ryegrass is established, so be patient. Once it's ready, it will be well worth the wait.

Did you know, an established ryegrass winter lawn requires about half as much water to maintain as your summer lawn? Learn more about how to water your lawn and landscape sensibly; check out the Landscape Watering by the Numbers guide for the Arizona Desert, available from Water – Use It Wisely (available on our website and theirs).

7. Feed Your Lawn

After the second mowing, fertilize your lawn with Ferti-lome New Lawn Starter Fertilizer, Ferti-lome Green Maker premium lawn food or with E.B. Stone Organics Natural & Organic Lawn Food. To keep your winter at its best, fertilize your lawn according to product recommendations.

Ask the Experts at SummerWinds

Now is the perfect time to start thinking about establishing your ryegrass winter lawn this year. If you have questions about preparing your summer lawn for overseeding, stop by any one of our convenient valley locations to talk with one of our Trusted Garden Advisors. Then, get ready to have a lawn you can enjoy during the best months of the year to be outdoors!

Scan the QR code to learn more about growing a winter lawn during the best time of the year to be outdoors!

