



## **Overseeding info and tips**

### **Suggestions shared on transition back to Bermuda grass in the Spring**

Spring transition can be an unsightly time for turf. If you overseeded with winter rye grass last fall, warm season Bermuda grass is going to struggle to return. Lower mowing heights allowing more sunlight to contact the Bermuda and aeration of the turf areas to improve soil condition help this transition.

When overnight low temperatures are consistently above 65 degrees (usually in May), you can begin transitioning your winter rye grass back to Bermuda grass for the warm season. Dormant Bermuda only has a limited amount of stored energy which is quickly depleted as it competes with the aggressive rye for nutrients, sunlight and water in order to initiate new growth. For this reason, spring transition can be an unsightly time for turf but there are a few ways to aid the transition and get green grass back faster.

### **Mowing Height**

Actively growing rye grass shades the dormant Bermuda causing it to stay dormant longer while it struggles for enough sunlight to begin growing again. Lowering the mow height to 1–1.5 inches allows more sunlight to contact the Bermuda so it will come out of dormancy faster.

### **Aeration**

- To maintain a healthy lawn through periods of stress, the soil should have adequate water, air and nutrients in the top 6 to 10 inches.
- Aeration opens the soil, helps reduce compaction, improves water infiltration, improves rooting, reduces thatch and acts in many other ways to improve the lawn and reduce stress.
- Hard, compacted soils impede root growth, which prevents the grass from developing the deep root system that is essential to survive in hot, dry periods.
- Removing plugs of thatch and soil from the lawn through aeration allows adequate air, water and nutrients to penetrate the soil and gives the Bermuda roots strength to compete with the ryegrass.

### **Fertilization**

- Finally, once the Bermuda is growing again, a fertilizer high in nitrogen such as 21-0-0 or 21-7-14 applied once a month will keep it green.

## **Transitioning From Ryegrass to Bermuda grass**

Transitioning from rye grass back to Bermuda grass in the summer can be an unsightly time period for the lawn and the slightly cooler temperatures in Anthem make ryegrass hang around a little longer than in Phoenix, especially in areas that get less sunlight.

However, there are a few specific things you can do to aid the transition and get green Bermuda grass back sooner.

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### **Aeration**

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- Removing plugs of thatch and soil from your lawn through aeration allows adequate air, water and nutrients to penetrate the soil and gives the Bermuda roots strength to compete with the ryegrass.

### **Watering**

- Water every 1-3 days based on the needs of the Bermuda grass. To know how much water to apply, visit Arizona Cooperative Extension's Meteorological Network at <http://ag.arizona.edu/azmet/data/00plawn.htm> to see how much water to apply each week. The information is scientifically formulated based on turf water requirements and current weather data.

### **Fertilization**

- Apply a ½ lb. of a high nitrogen fertilizer such as 21-0-0 every two weeks until the lawn is 90% Bermuda grass.

## **Managing Bermuda grass**

If you didn't overseed with ryegrass last fall, your Bermuda grass should be looking great right now if you've cared for it properly. The air temperatures, overnight lows and humidity have been high and the Bermuda grass thrives in these conditions.

Here are some general tips to follow to keep your Bermuda grass looking good all summer:

## **Fertilize**

- Fertilize every 4-6 weeks. Typically, ammonium sulphate (21-0-0) or Turf Royale (21-7-14) work best and are the most cost effective.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on the bag. You can easily find these products at your local irrigation specialty (e.g., Horizon, Ewing, John Deere) or home improvement stores.

## **Water**

- Visit Arizona Cooperative Extension's Meteorological Network at <http://ag.arizona.edu/azmet/data/00plawn.htm> to see how much water to apply each week.
- Water at night or in the early morning hours (just before sunrise is optimal) when wind and evaporation are low.

## **Mowing**

- Mow as often as necessary to maintain the lawn height you prefer without removing more than 1/3 of the grass blade in one mowing. You may have to mow more than once a week during hot, humid weather.
- Always use sharp mower blades and avoid mowing wet grass.