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Starting a Lawn from Grass Seed

April is a great time to start a lawn with grass seed or over-seed weak areas in the lawn. Start by breaking up the soil with a hard rake or rototill it if the ground is really hard. After breaking up the soil, rake the area to be seeded to remove rocks, twigs, and to level the yard.

Landscape rakes with a 36" rake head are designed for leveling large areas, and they make quick work of it. These rakes can usually be rented from rental yards. Once the lawn is level, then you can apply the grass seed.

Most grass seeds recommend applying 4 lbs per 1000 sq. ft. I like to apply at about 7 lbs per 1000 sq. ft. It seems to fill in quicker with no long-term ill effects. After applying seed, we need to add a starter fertilizer. Ferti-lome makes one called New Lawn Starter. It is formulated for new sod or seed and I highly recommended it.

Next, make sure the seed is in contact with the soil. Lightly rake or use a lawn roller over the area seeded. This will ensure the seed is embedded in the soil for proper germination.

Now you need to add a thin layer of peat moss over the seeded areas to hold in moisture. Once all of this is done, you need to lightly water the seed. Because the seed is close to the surface, watering should be done in short watering cycles (typically 5 minutes or less) but often (3 times a day). The biggest mistake made is allowing the grass seed to dry out between watering.

Depending on the type of seed, after 7 to 14 days, you should see green fuzz on the ground and after a month, it should start to look like a yard, although thin. Normally you can mow the grass now, even though some areas are not high enough, others will need a cut.

Now is the time to add another application of Ferti-lome New Lawn Starter and cut the watering back to 2 times a day. Once you have mowed the grass twice, apply a broadleaf weed killer like Ferti-lome Weed-Out. From this point on, you should be able to treat it as an established yard. The lawn will continue to fill in and thicken up for the rest of the summer. Any area that didn't establish can be reseeded as needed by following the steps above.