

#### **Dormant Seeding of Turfgrass**

**Well...I missed it... The hole I created repairing a busted water line this summer got filled in before it got cold, but not until late October. That meant that the grass didn't get seeded, meaning I might be heading in to spring with a blank area if I don't do something this winter. So while I missed the optimum time this fall (September) and spring 2019 is an option (assuming I don't miss that window, too...), I think I'll try a dormant seeding and see what happens.**

**Dormant seeding, as the name implies, is simply seeding cool season turf grasses during their dormant season. We typically think of it as seeding in December through February when it is much too cold for seed to germinate. It's not a great option for large areas, but it can work nicely for filling in bare spots.**

**Dormant seeding is not just throwing some grass seed out there with hopes that it comes up in the optimum time next spring. Good seed-soil contact is still vital to the success of the seeding process with a few options to make that happen.**

**One method involves timing of the seeding when there has been a light snowfall (up to an inch). With these light snowfalls, we can still see where the bare spots are at, allowing for seed to be spread seed by hand on the soil surface in those areas. As the snow melts, it will bring the seed into good contact with the soil where it will germinate in the spring.**

**A second method requires the soil surface to be moist followed by freezing weather. In a scenario like this, the moist soil forms pockets from freeze/thaw cycles. These pockets are great for catching and holding seed, and they'll eventually collapse as the soil dries, covering the seed.**

**If the soil is dry and not frozen (time will tell as to whether we'll see that again this winter...), you can also try core aeration, verticutting or hand raking followed by a broadcast application of seed immediately after. Again, this only works if soil is dry and not frozen.**

**Because it's too cold for it to germinate, the seed will sit there and wait until spring, germinating as soon as conditions are right. With any luck, that will get it up and going before other weeds start to take hold.**

**There are some limitations to these winter seeding methods. One of the biggest is herbicide selection, since some herbicides, crabgrass preventers in particular, can really mess with seed germination and growth of newly seeded turfgrass seeds. For these situations, use products with active ingredients like siduron (Tupersan can be used as a crabgrass preventer on new seedlings before they have come up)**

**or dithiopyr (Hi-Yield Turf and Ornamental Weed and Grass Stopper can be used on tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass two weeks after germination). Dithiopyr is longer lasting and more effective than siduron, but either will likely be a better option than the other preemergence herbicides available to homeowners that require turf be well established before application. For postemergent applications of many of our broadleaf weed killers, be sure you are within an appropriate treatment window. As with all herbicide products, be sure to read and follow label directions.**