

Turf Program For: "Lawn Care 101"

Soil –

- Avoid layers of any kind; good on bad – loam on clay – sand on loam – NO LAYERS
- Amend native soils with humus and structure (*i.e. quality compost, polymers, etc.*)
- Till / incorporate $\approx 1\text{-}2 \text{ yrd}^3$ of amendments per 1000ft² to **at least** 4-8 inches depth
- Remove any rocks larger than an egg, water to settle, final grade with rake

Seed –

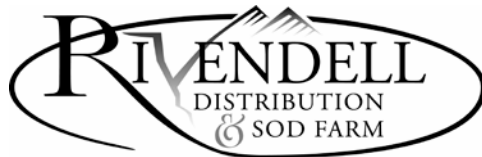
- Cool season grass options for turf:
 - o Improved Kentucky Bluegrass (BEST CHOICE FOR OUR CLIMATE & SOILS)
 - o Fine Fescues
 - o Turf-Type Tall Fescue
 - o Perennial Ryegrass
- General application rates from 3 to 6 lbs per 1000ft²
- Rake **lightly** and cover with a processed, seed-free mulch to prevent seed attrition and maintain consistent moisture levels
- Apply high phos starter fertilizer (*unless already contained in mulch*)
- Maintain constantly moist, but not soaked surface for ≈ 2 weeks
- Gradually train seedlings to chase longer, less frequent waters to drive down roots

Sod –

- Choose sod grown from at least 3 different listed, quality varieties
- Install sod along the longest straight line first, such as a driveway or sidewalk
- Butt all edges together tightly without stretching and avoid gaps or overlaps
- Stagger the joints in each row in a brick-like pattern
- Avoid leaving small strips at the outer edge, as they will not retain moisture well
- Protect exposed edges with dirt or edging when finished
- Soak sod with at least 1 inch of water within 1/2 hour of installation
- Water twice daily, or more often with hot windy conditions, keeping sod moist until it is firmly rooted (about 2 weeks) then begin less frequent and deeper watering
- Remember that wind patterns and heat reflection (windows, sidewalks, etc.) may affect water needs!

Fertilizer–

- N – P – K ratio is more important than number values; 4 – 1 – 2 is often ideal
- Quality, slow release nutrients result in healthy 'sustainable' growth
- Apply 1-1½ lbs of N per 1000ft² every 60-90 days throughout the growing season
- Avoid high salt indexes (*ammonium nitrate, potassium chloride*) and "weed-n-feed" type combos if possible
- Fall feeding (*just after first frost*) may be the most critical- SLOW RELEASE



Organic Soil Treatment –

- ❑ Apply “live” organic amendments and humates along with fertilization in order to increase the uptake and efficiency of nutrients
- ❑ Use organic treatments to improve water penetration and plant usage and to protect the turf against disease, drought and wear stress
- ❑ Beneficial microbes help oxidize soil contaminants and remediate soil problems
- ❑ Earthworms are exceptional aerators who work for scraps!

Watering –

- ❑ As a general rule turfgrass should be irrigated in deeper waterings less frequently
- ❑ As the grass matures the watering times should become progressively longer, but not past point of run-off
- ❑ The goal is to eventually rotate zones on a 3-5 day cycle, aiming to apply 1-1½” of water per week (*½” per month will keep bluegrass dormant yet alive*)
- ❑ Watering should be done in early morning, decreasing evaporative loss while allowing the surface to dry during the day as the roots draw moisture from deeper soil
- ❑ During the hottest part of the summer total water usage can be minimized by a “syringe” watering of one brief rotation (2-5 minutes) in early afternoon to cool the surface temperature and reduce heat stress

Mowing –

- ❑ Lawn should be mowed between a height of 2” and 3½” with each cutting taking no more than 1/3 of blade height at one time
- ❑ Maintaining sharp cutting blades will help decrease plant stress
- ❑ Leave clippings on the lawn (*except fist mowing of season if fungus/turf damage present*)
- ❑ Final mowing of season should be shorter, 1½”-2”

Aeration –

- ❑ Critical to aerate once a year due to our compaction prone clay soils
- ❑ Spring or fall, using a coring (*plug type*) machine or a knife/tine aerator will greatly increase the water penetration and diminish the effects of soil layering and compaction
- ❑ Immediately following aeration is also an ideal time to top dress problem areas with fine-screened compost (*OK to mix 50/50 w/ sand*) and/or to overseed

Weeds –

- ❑ Healthy, vigorously growing turfgrass is the first line of defense
- ❑ Weeds should be ignored until young turf is sufficiently developed and healthy enough to tolerate chemical application, spot spraying is preferable (*targeted chemotherapy*)
- ❑ Nuisance weeds like dandelion, clover, and thistle, bindweed and mallow are relatively easy to control by **judicious** use of common broad-leaf herbicides

Enjoy –

- ❑ 10000ft² of turf grass will provide enough O₂ for a family of four
- ❑ Kick back, stay cool, play ball, and show-off your grass!