

Lawn Renovation

Lawn renovation is the improvement of the turf area without starting completely over, or what is often called complete or total reestablishment. Turfgrass renovation is sometimes necessary when the existing turf or lawn has declined to a point where normal best cultural practices will not return the turf to the desired look. Lawn renovation is typically done if more than fifty percent of the lawn has desirable turf. If the lawn has less than fifty percent desirable turf, often total reestablishment is done.

Many factors can cause the turf to decline and then to need repair. Improper mowing, improper watering and fertilizing; poor drainage, soil compaction, excessive traffic, thatch, shade and other factors can contribute to turf decline.

Cool season turfs are best renovated during the late summer or early fall. Warm season turfs are best renovated in spring or early summer.

The Process of Partial Lawn Renovation

- Determine the cause or causes of the lawn failure. You might need to trim trees to eliminate shade, aerate to relieve compaction etc. The “root” causes need to be fixed.
- Test the soil. Soil sample can be taken to the local extension office or you might test the soil yourself. Follow the recommendation as a result of the soil test.
- Eliminate all undesirable weeds or other turf species not wanted. Keeping good turf. Be aware that a waiting period may be necessary after applying an herbicide. Check the label.
- Mow the area much lower than normal and remove any clippings or other debris.
- Remove any excessive thatch layer.
- Cultivate the soil by coring or tilling to relieve compaction.
- Apply fertilizer and lime or sulfur according to the soil test
- Seed, sprig, plug or sod new grass into the area.
- Water immediately after planting and keep the soil moist until establishment occurs.
- Mow the grass when it reaches 1 ½ times its recommended height

The Process of Total Lawn Renovation

- Determine the cause or causes of the lawn failure. You might need to trim trees to eliminate shade, aerate to relieve compaction etc. The “root” causes need to be fixed.
- Test the soil. Soil sample can be taken to the local extension office or you might test the soil yourself. Follow the recommendation as a result of the soil test.
- Eliminate all weeds, and turf species by spraying the entire area with a non-selective herbicide. Be aware that a waiting period may be necessary after applying an herbicide. Check the label.

- Mow the area much lower as the than normal and remove any clippings or other debris. Mowing should be done on the lowest possible setting.
- Remove any excessive thatch layer.
- Cultivate the soil by coring or tilling to relieve compaction.
- Apply fertilizer and lime or sulfur according to the soil test
- Seed, sprig, plug or sod new grass into the area.
- Water immediately after planting and keep the soil moist until establishment occurs.
- Mow the grass when it reaches 1 ½ times its recommended height

The difference between partial renovation and total renovation is one major step. In partial renovation, you are leaving the good turf on site. In total renovation, you are killing the entire turf before replanting the site. Typically, in total renovation you would be seeding a new turf into the entire area.

If you are going to sod the entire area, remove all vegetation from the site and till the area before planting. This is referred to as total reestablishment.