

Grass is a living plant and requires as much care and attention as any other garden plant, and more so in establishment. And so now that we have overseeded/sown your new lawn, there are a few steps you need to take to help it establish and thrive.

1) Within the next 12-24 hours, water the seed making sure to water it gently (ideally with a hose with a gentle spray attachment). This is because the seeds mustn't be moved by the water coming out of a hose too fast. A gentle spray helps ensure they stay in place and bed properly in the soil to start germination straight away. Although it's important to water it gently, you must ensure you water it enough, ensuring the soil is moist but not soaked.

2) Over the following days, if we don't get much rain, you must be sure to keep gently watering it. Every 3 days should be fine unless it's particularly warm when you'll need to do it more often. But again, make sure it is watered enough for the soil to be moist without being soaked. A light spell of rain won't be enough.

3) You must keep an eye on the grass seeds, and when they have germinated, and the grass from the seeds has grown to about the length of your little finger (5-7cm), either roll the lawn with a roller or gently walk over the entire lawn in flat shoes. This is to ensure the seeds are nicely embedded in the soil, making confident contact so they won't lift when you mow. Whilst this isn't always a necessary step, I include it in our advice to ensure you get the best results.

4) 2 or 3 days after you've done this, and when the new grass is between 5-7.5cm tall, give it a first cut, being sure to only reduce the height of the grass by about 1/3.

5) From here on, it's important to mow your lawn at least once per week at the highest setting to start with, but progressively lowering the blades until the new grass and established grass are at the same height (assuming your lawn has been over-seeded). If you don't, the taller grass will prevent light, air, water and nutrients from getting down to the soil and roots. For newly seeded lawns, continue to mow at the highest setting until fully established and slowly lower the blades to your desired height.

6) Once the new grass has fully established and is growing at the same rate as the rest of your grass, you can reduce mowing to once every 7-10 days if you want to. However, I would add that for a really beautiful well-maintained lawn, you may want to mow it more often. We often mow ours twice a week. The more you mow, the stronger and thicker the sward gets and the more beautiful your lawn will look. Just keep an eye on the length of the grass and as soon as it gets beyond half the length of your little finger, get the mower out, making sure never to cut more than 1/3 off the length of the grass at a time.

7) During the entire germination and initial growing period until it is established, it is important to keep traffic to a minimum on your grass and to avoid anything being placed on your lawn, whether that be toys, furniture or other debris. Keeping people off the grass and clear of all items will help it establish and ensure the seeds sown stay in place and get the full amount of water, air, light and nutrients needed to thrive.

8) Finally, birds. As beautiful and welcome in a garden as they normally are, they can pose a risk to newly seeded or overseeded lawns by eating the seeds. There are many methods you can use to deter them, but these are our favourites.....

a) Cover the area with netting or a thin fleece secured at the edges, making sure to remove it after a few days as soon as the seeds have germinated and bedded in the soil. If you leave it too long, you risk the grass getting tangled in it, making removal difficult and you risk tearing the delicate grass from its roots when you do.

b) Install bird feeders in an area away from the newly seeded lawn to attract birds away from the area and, in doing so, divert their attention from the lawn.

c) Scare tactics. Hang reflective materials, like CDs or aluminium foil strips, around the perimeter of your lawn to scare birds off. Motion-activated sprinklers or fake owls can also be effective at keeping them away.

Maintaining a beautiful lawn really takes some time and effort, often more than people realise, but if you follow the steps above, you will achieve a thick, healthy and beautiful lawn to enjoy and be proud of.