

FACT SHEET

Grass Seed

Year-Round Water Conservation Measures

Are you using grass seed to establish a new lawn, renovate a poor-performing lawn, or simply overseed an existing lawn? The answer determines whether extra watering is allowed.

Establishing a New Lawn

In other words, the entire area contains no plant material, so grass seed is being used to create a lawn.

- In this situation, the entire area qualifies for the District's "new plant establishment" exemption (please refer to the fact sheet devoted to this subject).

Renovating a Poor-Performing Lawn

In other words, there are bare patches or visible thinning, but a lawn is already there, more or less. Perhaps there was damage to the grass due to a recent weed infestation, pest problem or lawn disease. Perhaps foot traffic or improper use of lawn chemicals caused injury to the roots or rhizomes as well as the grass blades. Perhaps too much water, too little water or a hard freeze has killed some of the grass.

- If at least 50% of a lawn area has been reduced to "bare dirt" and grass seed is being used to restore it, use of the irrigation zone associated with that area qualifies for the District's "new plant establishment" exemption (please refer to the fact sheet devoted to this subject).
- If less than 50% of an irrigation zone has been affected, only the seeded patches within that area qualify for the District's "new plant establishment" exemption. This means the patches must be watered by some targeted means, such as handwatering or a small hose-end sprinkler.

Overseeding an Existing Lawn

In other words, seed is being added to an existing lawn to improve its appearance. This is different than overseeding a golf course as part of a fall transition program (in such a program, cool-weather grass is added to the warm-weather grass as it goes semi-dormant to protect it from heavy winter play).

- Overseeding an existing lawn ***does not*** qualify for the "new plant establishment" exemption.
- The affected area may only be watered according to the normal irrigation schedule. If the seed is gently worked into the lawn (so that existing grass provides some shade to the seed, helping to keep the soil moist while it germinates), normal irrigation may be enough.
- There are several no-water alternatives to overseeding, including: appropriate fertilization (after testing the soil through the local UF-IFAS county extension service), application of an iron compound (to improve winter color), mowing high (to reduce stress to the grass during hot or dry weather) and spray-on paint designed to safely use on grass.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Water.Restrictions@WaterMatters.Org at any time or call 1-800-848-0499 during normal business hours.