



605 25<sup>th</sup> Street \* Greeley, CO 80631  
970-356-7002 \* 970-356-7263 (Fax)  
www.pawneebuttesseed.com

## Grass Seeding Guidelines

If the project soils have insufficient topsoil or undesirable physical characteristics for vegetation establishment, topsoil should be added to the deficient areas. Suggested minimum depth of topsoil is 4 inches.

If the soil is compacted, tillage to loosen the soil to a depth of 4 inches should be done. The ideal seedbed is firm enough to hold moisture and not be easily washed or blown away but loose enough for seed to develop root systems. As a general rule, the firmer the seedbed the better, as long as it is not compacted.

Use of fertilizer or compost is recommended. Soil testing is encouraged for fertilizer requirements. Preferable products for use include slow release organic fertilizers such as Biosol and compost which do not encourage excessive weed growth or fertilizer leaching as runoff. Where topsoil has been removed, use of Mycorrhizal Inoculum is also recommended. Mycorrhiza are naturally occurring soil fungi that attach to plant roots and enhance water and nutrient uptake. Inoculum does not replace soil fungi, it only speeds up the natural reintroduction process for faster plant establishment.

If the area is weedy, killing the weeds prior to planting with an herbicide that carries no residue will increase the success of your project.

If areas are large enough, drill seeding is recommended. Seed using a grass drill with double disc openers, depth bands, seed box agitator and picker wheel, and press wheels. Proper seeding depth is ¼" to ½" deep. Cultipacker style drills are acceptable to use in fine, well-prepared seedbeds. The drill should be equipped with seed boxes to handle the type of seed being planted. Turf seed can be planted using a cool season box with agitator while native grass seed requires the warm season box with agitator and picker wheel. Seeding rates are generally increased with cultipacker seeders since they are broadcast type seeders.

Smaller areas or areas not as accessible for drills can be broadcast seeded. Incorporate seed by harrowing or raking if possible. Hydroseeding may also be used with protective mulch.

Planting into dead sorghum stubble is a preferred method for seeding large areas. The stubble gives protection for the new seeding and helps trap moisture. Sorghum cover crops can be planted mid-May thru June. The permanent seeding can occur Nov 1 thru May 1 after the sorghum is dead. If planting into prepared seedbeds or in areas where sorghums do not grow, clean straw mulch, grass mulch, or hydromulch is recommended for protection. Straw and grass mulch can be crimped in after seeding as well as tackified to remain in place longer. Hydromulch should be applied only after seeding is complete.

Preferred planting dates for non-irrigated seedings are November 1<sup>st</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup> in the plains area. In higher elevations seeding can be done anytime during the short growing season. Irrigated plantings can be done throughout the summer if sufficient water is available. If the seed mix contains warm season species do not seed later than June to give plants enough time to establish before wintertime.

As your new planting establishes, weeds will need to be controlled. Mowing is best done frequently to reduce competition and prevent reseeding. Mow at a level that eliminates weeds but minimizes clipping the grasses. Generally, mow to a level no less than 4 to 6 inches. Mowing frequently with a mower that shreds the weeds helps prevent covering the new grass seedlings too deeply with residue and maintaining good sunlight penetration for the grasses.

Herbicide applications can be used after seedings are established. Read and follow all label directions for use with grasses as some species can be eliminated or injured by herbicides at various growth stages. If forbs are included in seeding mixes, herbicide options are generally not available. Contact your local County Extension Agent for more information on herbicide treatments.

By proper planning and installation, successful seedings are possible. All projects are not the same, so not all recommendations apply to all situations. Contact Pawnee Buttes Seed for specific information for your particular project.