

Association Mail Box

WE APPRECIATE YOUR LETTERS. KEEP THEM COMING!



Choosing Seeds

Could you please supply me with a list of top quality seeds for use on overseeding sports turf. I am looking for Kentucky bluegrass, creeping fescues and perennial ryegrass seeds to be used in a mixture. We are in eastern Ontario and perennial ryegrass is not winter hardy in this area.

We are currently using a mixture of 60% Kentucky bluegrass (3 types) and 40% creeping red fescue (2 types). I would like to add some perennial ryegrass to the mix to replace some of the creeping red fescue. We use this mix from mid-August to the end of September.

How much perennial ryegrass can you add to the mix without affecting the germination and growth of the Kentucky bluegrass?

In the spring I am looking at using a mix with a high percentage of perennial ryegrass. Is it worthwhile to add some Kentucky bluegrass or will it be smothered out by the perennial ryegrass? What are your recommendations for a spring mix to be used as an annual seeding.

We are members of the Sports Turf Association and are very pleased with the resources you supply. Any additional support you could provide would be much appreciated.

— Terry Egan, Parks and Operations Supervisor, City of Nepean, 613-829-8880

Response from Pam Charbonneau

As far as different cultivars of perennial ryegrass, fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, I can provide you with a list of

what is sold in Ontario. A good internet resource is the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program at www.ntep.org. It has trial results from all the different grass species at various locations, with some in Canada.

As far as how much perennial ryegrass in the mixture, if you go greater than 20%, you virtually get all perennial ryegrass because it will establish and shade out or out compete with the Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescue seedlings.

As far as adding some Kentucky bluegrass to perennial rye for overseeding, I would not recommend to do that. It is best to go with 100% perennial ryegrass. You can blend several cultivars of perennial ryegrass however.

Perennial ryegrass is the best spring mix for an annual seeding.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

— Pam Charbonneau, OMAFRA Turfgrass Specialist, 519-824-4120 (x 2597), e-mail pcharbon@omafra.gov.on.ca

Grub Infestation

Much like other southern Ontario communities, the Town of East Gwillimbury is experiencing a grub infestation. I am looking for information on the following:

1. The best control methods.
2. The best re-construction methods for green spaces destroyed by these insects.
3. Any corporate policies on how other communities react to citizen concern of the perceived

migration from municipal to home-owner property.

Any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

— Terry Piche, Facilities Manager, Town of East Gwillimbury, 905-478-7941

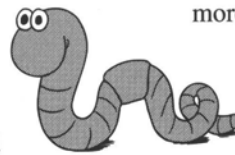
Response from Chris Mark

Terry, we have a fair bit of experience with grubs here in Oakville. This area has been impacted for probably 10-12 years by chafers. We will, in fact, be treating some areas this year. Answers to your questions are as follows:

Best Control Methods

A new product, MERIT, is on the market. It is produced by the Bayer company. Consult your local supplier for information. While the product is more expensive than traditional insecticides such as Diazinon, from what I hear it produces excellent results. We have not yet used MERIT, but I have heard great things from others. It affects very young grubs. Larger larvae are not controlled but if you can control the young larvae, with one application you should have good control. Apply in the later part of June and water it in.

For an organic solution you may want to use nematodes. They take longer and are a little more tricky to apply. You must apply them in the range of a million or more per application. We may try them this year as an organic treatment, but because we have no experience with nematodes, we would like to treat first with MERIT. I understand the



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City of Oshawa has had good success in controlling grubs on cul-de-sac islands with nematodes. Again, consult your local supplier for information.

Best Re-Construction Methods

Reconstruction usually means re-sodding. These guys are such vociferous root feeders that a full renovation is normally required. I suggest spraying in June, then renovating areas in late summer unless you have an irrigated site affected. You can overseed as a cheaper option, then definitely topdress. Overseed in mid-late August when you'll get a good seed catch. If it is a large area that needs overseeding and you don't have the staff or equipment, consider hydroseeding.

Homeowner Concerns

We have not been spraying and re-sodding town boulevards. We advise the homeowner that it is their responsibility. In the majority of cases, we take the position that the town boulevard in the front or at the side of your home is an extension of your front lawn. You cut it, fertilize

it, water it, water the street tree, etc. The only turf repairs we do are from snow plow damage. We do cut reverse frontage lots along major arteries where there is traditionally a sound or barrier fence, but generally have not controlled grubs.

Grubs like well manicured turf and many boulevards we look after along arterial roads and secondary roads are generally pretty sparse in comparison to frontage boulevards which the homeowner usually waters and fertilizes.

This policy or practice rubs many people the wrong way. We have had some challenges. Several years ago, ads were placed in the local paper(s) advising people of grubs, their impact, solutions and the homeowner's responsibility to deal with the problem. About all we do is give people advice. Of course grubs *always* migrate from the boulevard to the homeowner's property and never the reverse. This is hard to prove. They could also have migrated from an adjacent yard. Many of our boulevards are so compacted and have such poor soil that I'm not sure even grubs could tunnel their way through.

The bottom line is that we have miles of boulevard and if we had to repair/re-sod every one which had grub damage, the costs would be astronomical.

— Chris Mark, Past STA President, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation, Town of Oakville, 905-845-6601

Further Resources

Lee Huether, our Executive Manager, suggests the following resources for additional information

- OMAFRA's FACTSHEET entitled "Grubs in Lawns." It can be accessed at: www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/crops/facts/97-023.htm

- OMAFRA's *Turf Hotline* can be reached by telephone, 1-888-290-4441. This is a three minute recorded message which is updated weekly with timely information on turfgrass pests

- *THE GTI ADVISOR* (look in the *Turf Management* column). The regular publication season has started. New this year is free internet access on a special dedicated website: www.gti.uoguelph.ca/advisor. ♦

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