



To replace larger areas, strip the top two inches of topsoil in April.

"The extent of damage depends on the amount of salt and the type of grass. Tall fescue tolerates high saline levels the best, followed by perennial ryegrass, fine fescue and Kentucky bluegrass," says Pound.

If an entire strip dies, replace the dead turf and top two inches of topsoil in April in Midwestern climates, says Pound. But if you're dealing with a Kentucky bluegrass lawn and only parts have turned yellow, green grass will eventually fill in the damaged areas.

Ryegrass won't fill in, so reseed in early

spring.

"The need for topsoil replacement is only there if you want to replace the turf immediately," Pound points out, noting that many landscape managers use a sod cutter for this task. It's best to get a handle on the situation by doing some checks in the dead of winter. "I encourage people to take some soil samples." With a test for soluble salts, a reading above 150 indicates a saline level capable of killing grass.

—The author is a freelance writer specializing in the green industry. He maintains his office in South Euclid, Ohio.



Tall fescue tolerates salt better than other turf.

Wildflower seeding: pick best method for your site

■ The goal of wildflower seeding is simple—an even distribution of seed with good seed-to-soil contact.

That's not always easy to do, however, because of the great variation in the size of wildflower seed. Some species produce seed smaller than a pinhead while others may be several times larger and of a different shape.

Even so, a landscape manager can seed many sites with either a manual or tractor-pulled cyclone spreader, spreading them with a blending agent like sand or vermiculite. Also, some suppliers coat their seeds to make them easier to distribute, with at least one supplier using multi-colored coating so that appli-



Soil on this site has been loosened and is relatively weed-free, a good start for wildflower establishment. (Photo courtesy American Seed Trade Association)

The same site weeks later shows the results of good soil preparation and effective seeding. (Photo courtesy American Seed Trade Association)



cators can, at a glance, see how effectively they're dispersing seed.

Larger seeding projects call for different seeding strategies. Craig Steffens with the Texas Highway Department says his department uses three methods to broadcast wildflower seeds:

1) The most effective and expensive method is with a drill-type seeder where a rip shank forms a groove in the soil, seeds are dropped, and then a culti-packer comes back over to assure good seed-to-soil contact.

2) Another method used by the Texas DOT is a piece of chainlink fence weighted down (with rocks or a railroad tie) and dragged
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Plan for winter in the summer

■ The best way to avoid getting plowed under by winter snow and ice removal is to think winter in summer. Consider the snow when planning the landscape.

In snowy climates, any landscape plan has to be checked to make sure it leaves places to pile snow. Failure to ponder this point can leave you with a mountain of problems come the following spring: dead ornamentals, damaged lawns and irate customers.

Dr. Bill Pound, Ohio State University: "Be careful about what you plant and where you plant it." A strip of mulch around landscaped edges can reduce costs if snowblower damage is a recurring problem among your customers.

Joseph Hudak, a Westwood, Mass. landscape architect: "Avoid brittle plants whenever possible. Day lilies are one of the least sensitive plants for abuse. They're used a great deal in Canada along highways where they salt things to death."

Trees alongside driveways need special attention. Plan or prune so that you avoid low-hanging horizontal branches when the plow comes.

"The more snow they have the more they will hang down. If you have branches that won't clear the cab, you won't have any branches."

If you or your clients use a snowblower, look out for those tight hedges. "You've got that barrier staring you and your snowblower right in the kisser." Snowplows, snowblowers and salt can bring damage to any type of plantings along driveways and sidewalks. A misguided plow blade can easily strip away big chunks of grass and anything else in its way.

John M. Bass, Lawn Master, Midvale, Utah: Pounding in stakes in the fall, and maintaining fallen ones throughout the winter, can also help reduce lawn and bed damage. "We'll go out and mark the curbs so when we're pushing snow we'll know where to push it to."

Phil Jorgenson, Tuff Turf, Merriam, Kansas: "The main thing is taking corners." It's great customer relations to repair any plow damage free of charge. It can be an excellent advantage to you when compared to other plowers, such as off-season construction contractors and the like, who are unable or unwilling to guarantee that the proper repairs will be made.

—J.E.G.

behind a tractor or pick-up truck over the area to be planted. This is usually done over existing vegetation, roughing up the area enough to allow seeds to get into the soil.

3) The least expensive, but also the least productive, of the three methods is the collection of wildflower hay from existing plantings. This is then re-distributed over the area to be planted. The germination rate of the wildflowers is generally low.

Wildflowers can also be planted with a hydroseeder or hydromulcher. Hydro-machines can seed slopes where it is impossible to use tractor-drawn seeders. Organic glues (tackifiers), when sprayed with the hay or straw mulch, help hold the seeds in place.

Some contractors have had trouble with small wildflower seed getting hung up in the machines or in the mulch itself. Consider doing the seeding and mulching in two steps, seeding first and mulching second, or increase the seeding rate for the wildflowers.

The combination of seed, water and mulch may allow you to extend the wildflower planting season. The mulch moder-

ates temperature variations, and protects new seedlings from summer's high temperatures.

There is no "right" or "wrong" method of establishing wildflowers. Each site will

be different and each situation will present its own challenge.

— Laura Martin, Wildflower Group, American Seed Trade Association.

Seeders just for wildflowers



J-Thom 42 Wildseeder: for large-scale wildflower seedlings.

■ The growing popularity of wildflowers spurs the development of specialized new seeding equipment.

The J-Thom 42 Wildseeder is a no-till drill seeder that can plant up to 14 varieties of wildflower seed in one pass and 100 seed

varieties at different applications, says its manufacturer. It's particularly suited for highway departments, commercial growers and research centers.

Contact: Wildseed, Incorporated, 1101 Campo Rosa Road, P.O. Box 308, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434. 409-234-7353.

The Truax Wildflower Seed Planters can be transported in the back of a pickup, and can be pulled onto a site with an ATV or garden tractor. Features on the two models (WF-24 and WF-32) include vertical row dividers to prevent sliding of seed when seeding on slopes, and both auger agitators and seed metering picker wheels in the fluffy box.

Contact: Truax, 3609 Vera Cruz Ave., No., Minneapolis, Minn. 55422. 612-537-6639.

Albright Seed Company
1482 Unit A Francis St.
Ontario, CA 91761

Applewood Seed Company
5380 Vivian St.
Arvada, CO 80002

Baldwin Seed Co. of Alaska
Box 3127
Kenai, AL 99611-3127

Bitterroot Native Growers
P.O. Box 566
Hamilton, MT (zip code?)
406/961-4702

Daehnfeldt
1100 Southeast Jackson St.
Albany, OR 97321
503-928-5868

Environmental Seed Producers
P.O. Box 2709
Lompoc, CA 93438
805/735-8888

Great Western Seed Co.
810 Jackson Street SE, PO Box
387
Albany, OR 97321
503-928-3100

LESCO, Inc.
20005 Lake Road
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
216/333-9250

Lofts Seed Inc.
Chimney Rock Road
PO Box 146
Boundbrook, NJ 08805
908/356-8700

McLaughlin's Seeds
Buttercup's Acre
Mead, WA 99021-0550
509/466-0230

Medalist America
1490 Industrial Way, SW,
Albany, OR 97321
503/926-0126

Northplan/Mountain Seed
PO Box 9107
Moscow, ID 83843
208/882-8040

Northrup-King
7500 Olson Memorial Highway
Golden Valley, MN 55427
800/445-0956

Pennington Seed
PO Box 290
Madison, GA 30650
404/342-1234

Turf-Seed, Inc.
PO Box 250
Hubbard, OR 97032
503-651-2130

SSS Seeds
PO Box 1275
Carpinteria, CA 93010
805/684-0436

Sharp Bros. Seed Co.
PO Box 140
Healy, KS 67850
316/398-2231

Stock Seed Farm
R.R. 1, Box 112
Murdock, NE 68450
402-867-3771

Vermont Wildflower Farm
Dept. BK, Route 7
Charlotte, VT 05445-0005
802/425-3500

Wildflower Carpet
1325 South Colorado Blvd.,
Suite 404, Denver, Colorado
80222
303/756-7943

Wildseed Farms, Inc.
PO Box 308
Eagle Lake, TX 77434
409/234-7353

Willamette Seed Co.
PO Box 791
Albany, OR 97321-0277
503/926-8883

Wind River Seed
Route 1, Box 97
Manderson, WY 82432
307/568-3325

Wildflower seed suppliers

Cactus Seed Company
50505 E. County First Street
Roll, AZ 85347
602/785-9605

Cenex Seed
PO Box 608, 951 Rundell Road
Gering, NE 69341
605-336-0623

Clyde Robin Seed Co.
3670 Enterprise Ave.
Hayward, CA 94545
415/785-9425

Jacklin Seed Co.
W 5300 Riverbend Ave.
Post Falls, ID 83854

Johnny's Selected Seeds
RFD 1, Box 2580
Albion, ME 04910

Jonathan Green
PO Box 326
Squankum-Yellowbrook Road
Farmingdale, NJ 07727
908/938-7007