

INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY
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Keep the following points in mind as we enter late summer. Cool season grasses, like Kentucky bluegrass, grow best in the spring and fall. The recommended height for Kentucky bluegrass is two to two and one-half inches in the spring and fall and three inches in the summer.

Now is a good time to plant grass seed to fill thin or bare spots in your lawn. A late summer to early fall seeding has several advantages over spring seeding. The seeds of cool-season grasses germinate quickly in the warm soil of late summer and the warm days and cool nights of early fall promote rapid turf grass growth. The growing grass also has less competition from weeds, as few weed seeds germinate in the fall.

To increase the success of overseeding thin areas in your lawn, first determine what caused the thin grass and correct the problem before seeding. Next, prepare your site properly. For small areas, mow existing grass to a height of one and one-half to two inches. Rake the area, but be sure to break the soil surface and remove existing turf grass. Hand sow the seed and rake again to work the seed into the soil. It is important to have good seed to soil contact.

Once the grass is sown, it is important to keep the seedbed moist with light frequent water applications. Mow the lawn often to a height of one and one-half to two inches to reduce competition from established turf grass. As you mow the new seedlings, increase the mowing height gradually; the final mowing height should be three to three and one-half inches. Six weeks after germination, apply one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet to fertilize the lawn.

Mid-August to mid-September is also a good time to plant trees, shrubs, perennials and spring-flowering bulbs. The following tips come from Richard Jauron, ISU Extension Horticulturalist, “Balled, burlapped and container-grown trees and shrubs can be planted in late summer and fall. Mid-August through September is an excellent time to plant evergreens, such as pine and spruce. Deciduous trees and shrubs (those that drop their leaves in the fall) can be planted from August through early November. Trees that are planted in late summer or early fall should be watered every seven to ten days during dry weather. Continue watering until the ground freezes.”

“Late summer/early fall is an excellent time to plant many perennials. It is also a good time to move or divide perennials, such as peony, daylily, garden phlox and Oriental poppy. Perennials planted in late summer or early fall should be mulched with 4-6 inches of straw, pine needles or other materials in late fall.”

If you have questions on late summer or fall planting, contact the Grundy office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.