



YES, WE CAN GROW GRASS IN SHADE- IN KANSAS CITY!



June - Turf-Type Fescue seeded in early fall the previous year

There is nothing special about the pictures other than proof that grass CAN grow in shade in Kansas City. Of course it takes some effort on our part, but Mom Nature can work with us to accomplish the goal of acceptable grass in shade. If we can achieve this, your neighbors will call you the “Grass Guru”.

First off, we need to select the right type of grass for this situation, which is not easy in KC since we’re in the transition zone. We do not have a perfect grass in our area. Turf-type tall fescue blends or a mix with 10% blue, like KC Marathon™, make the most sense because they have the best heat tolerance in our climate. KC Marathon™ compliments the strengths of both and makes a durable lawn.

EARLY FALL SEEDING (SEPTEMBER) IS BY FAR THE BEST TIME TO SEED - Note the picture showing the success with seeding in early fall. Fescue and bluegrass have two growing seasons to manufacture deep roots: fall and spring. Tender grass seedlings grow in the fall and toughen up thru winter. They have a second root growth cycle in spring to store energy for hot summer months when the grass draws on the root reserves to survive. In other words, a September seeding gives the grass about 9 months to mature before it undergoes summer heat stress. We want every day possible for our grass to develop roots. Early fall seeding also avoids the conflict of using a spring weed preventer.

We also take advantage of trees losing their leaves in fall which allows increased sunlight to reach the young grass. Sunlight is energy, and at this time of year the grass uses this energy for root growth. If we plant grass in the spring under trees, the sunlight energy decreases as the shade from leaves increases. Spring seeding in shade areas can be accomplished, but fall seeding is best.

- ◆ Work up the ground with a steel rake or rent a verticutter. You can also seed with a core aerifier to punch holes if soil is compacted.
- ◆ Spread 6 lb./1000 sq.ft. of KC Endurance™ (a turf-type fescue blend) or KC Marathon™ (a turf-type fescue/ blue grass mix) in bare ground shade areas. Seed about ½ this amount if you have existing grass but just want to thicken the stand.
- ◆ Apply starter fertilizer.
- ◆ Water to keep the seed moist for 2 weeks, because it must stay wet. Once it germinates, you can water less frequently. Watering and seed to soil contact are extremely important for best success. Lack of either two are the biggest reasons for failure.
- ◆ About 2-3 weeks after germination, apply fertilizer again at light rates.



Lastly - Mature trees are fierce competitors to grass for not only sunlight, but also for water and nutrients. To achieve a good stand of grass in the shade, be sure to water and fertilize in a timely manner.

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