

Reseeding

For those of you who were planning on reseeding this spring, unless you are planting a warm season grass it's best to wait now until winter to plant. All grass seed has a preferred soil temperature at which it will germinate. Since most of the grasses planted in this area are cool season grasses, they prefer to germinate when the soil is cooler. Our soils are now warming up past the ideal temperature for cool season grasses. Most grasses and especially native grasses have a built in survival mechanism known as dormancy. The grass seed that is "dormant" needs a trigger to break the dormancy so that it will germinate. In most cases that's a cold cycle such as winter. By planting in November, December, or early next year, you can actually raise your germination percentage in the first year. If you plant grass with dormant seed in the spring, only that seed that isn't dormant will germinate the first year. The seed that is dormant will germinate in the second year after going through a cold cycle.



All is not lost for this year though. You can use the summer to get the area prepared for reseeding in the winter. If you have weed issues, they are best addressed before you reseed so that the weeds are not competing with the grass as it gets established. If you already have the seedbed prepared, consider planting a sterile millet or oats as a cover crop. They are both annuals. You can mow them before they go to seed and they will provide you with stubble that you can plant into. The stubble will trap and hold any snow we get, shade the soil and protect against wind damage.