

# Reclamation and Habitat Planting Tips

**SPRING PLANTING:** Early spring or when temperature is between 40°–75°F is the ideal time for seeding. Freezing or colder temperatures should not harm the seed or the young seedlings, but may slow the germination or initial growth by a few days or weeks.

**FALL PLANTING:** As a general rule, seeding should be completed from 6-8 weeks before the traditional first frost. Some cool season reclamation grasses can be planted in early fall to allow for germination and adequate growth. Planting 6-8 weeks before the traditional first frost should allow for the young plants to be mature enough to survive the winter.

**DORMANT PLANTING:** Most native cool season grasses and legumes should be sown after the soil temperature has decreased to 60-55 °F or cooler to ensure the seeds will not germinate. Planting during the winter allows for the native grass & legume seed to be naturally cold-stratified, which is a necessary process for germination of most native cool season species.

## 1. Site Preparation

Before planting, remove or kill existing vegetation from the planting site with a non-selective herbicide such as Round-Up. Once the vegetation has been killed, remove the un-wanted vegetation using whatever methods are best suited for your site.

- a. Till the site to a depth of 4-6", if needed. No-till seeding may work for your mix type.
- b. Level and firm the area and apply a starter fertilizer. Contact your county extension or local farm store for recommended fertilizer. Based on what is being planted, pH and other considerations.
- c. Roll and water the area (if possible) to settle the soil.

## 2. Seeding

Apply seed at the recommended rate for the area you are establishing.

- a. Check the weather conditions. If you are seeding when it is too windy or hot you may have a complete failure. Seed early in the spring as soon as you can get on the ground. Ideally, you'd prepare the ground for seeding prior to the onset of ideal seeding conditions.
- b. Broadcast using the rate recommended. Typically, a broadcasted seeding rate is double the rate of drilling.
  - i. Once broadcasted you should roll or press the seed into the soil ensuring good seed to soil contact. A spring-tooth harrow, chain link fencing, heavy chain or other should be dragged to lightly cover the seed with soil, approximately 1/8" -1/4". DO NOT sow the seed too deeply.
- c. Drill the seed at a shallow depth 1/8-1/4" and use the recommended seeding rate. Using rollers, press the seed firmly into the soil. DO NOT sow the seed too deeply!

## 3. Watering

Keep the seed bed moist for 45 to 60 days, allowing the plants to completely germinate and begin their establishment. If you are on non-irrigated land, sow the seed early enough in the spring to take advantage of spring moisture. If you're seeding dry land in late May or Early June you are TOO late, unless you have a means to supplement the moisture, we recommend seeding in the fall.

- a. Keep ground moist during the initial germination stage. Keep daily water, as needed, until the plants have reached the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> leaf stage.
- b. After the planting site is established and growing for 60 days, a deep watering will promote a deeper root system.
  - i. Making plants more tolerant to grazing pressure and drought tolerant.

## 4. Establishment

It is recommended to keep animals off a new pasture for one year. This will allow the plant to develop a strong root structure and prevent the plants from being pulled out.

## 5. Weed control

Be aware that weed seed is present in the soil before you begin your project. If weeds sprout in your new pasture, wait 45 days before applying a weed killer (consult your county extension/farm store for recommended herbicide) as new plants are easily killed by a pre-mature application of herbicide. Follow the written directions on the herbicide.

## 6. Fertilizing

For a faster establishment and a healthier site, fertilize 4-6 weeks after planting. A spring and fall fertilization should be part of your site management practices.