

Revitalizing a lawn? Start from scratch

Revitalizing a dead or weed-stricken lawn is something that is often difficult to do. Rather, you may want to consider starting from scratch, so you'll have a blank canvas on which to grow a healthy, beautiful lawn. But where to start? Here are some tips anyone with even a moderate green thumb can handle:

* Know what type of grass you should plant. Different regions of the country and their climates respond better to certain types of grass than others. In the southern United States, for instance, Bermuda grass, Carpet grass or Korean Lawngrass are among your best choices. In the north, however, Kentucky bluegrass, Bentgrass or Redtop are all more appropriate and likely to thrive in the climate. Before planting

or purchasing any grass seed, consult with a local lawn care professional at your nearest hardware or garden-supply store.

Once you've learned what grasses are best for your region and you've decided on a particular blend, you can start to prepare your land for planting.

* Remove all debris from your yard. This will include any trash in the yard, wood, large roots and even stones. Once you've removed all debris, you can continue to prepare for planting by using a spade or rake to smooth the soil. Next you'll want to loosen the soil as well, something that can be done with a garden rake. Any unsightly areas, such as humps or ditches, should either be smoothed out or filled in, depending on which is appropriate.

* Spread the seed and know your area. If your lawn is not particularly big, you can scatter the seed by hand. If you have a

larger lawn, a drop spreader, which is sold at any hardware store, will do the trick.

* Mulch. This is an important step because it will keep the soil moist and conducive to growing grass. You can mulch with just about anything, be it topsoil, straw or even dried manure. Keep mulch at about a quarter-inch, as this is just a precautionary step to ensure your lawn will grow in nicely and shouldn't be overdone.

* Water. After you've mulched, you can now begin to water. Again, however, exercise caution, as too much water sprayed at too high a setting means you're running the risk of washing away seed. Once you've finished sowing, soak the soil about six inches deep. Seeds will not begin to germinate for at least seven days, so you'll need to water for at least that long and possibly longer.

Herbs...

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sun or light shade, spaced very far apart, about 60 to 90 cm because this herb expands exponentially. The most common mints are Spearmint and Peppermint but there are hundreds of more varieties - Apple, Orange, Ginger, Chocolate, Pear, Pineapple and so on.

Parsley - An excellent source of vitamins A, B and C, parsley is generally grown as an annual with preferably cool temperatures. Grow in full sun, spaced 20 to 25 cm apart. The most common of this dark green mound is Italian Parsley (flat-leaf) and Curled Parsley.

Rosemary - Quite a difficult herb, taking its pretty time to grow, this annual (or very tender perennial, wherever you may live) goes a long way. It tolerates light shade but would prefer full sun. Space 45 to 60 cm apart in the garden but this herb also does well in containers.

Sage - This strong herb, often used in Mom's dressing, is a hardy perennial. It likes a sheltered full sun, planted 30 to 45 cm apart. Most common is the Garden Sage (all green) but other common varieties of sage are Purple Sage, Tri-colour Sage and Pineapple Sage.

Thyme - A common component to many household products, thyme is a tender perennial that doesn't like to dry out. Grow in full sun about 45 cm apart. English Thyme is one of the most common varieties but look for others like Golden Lemon Thyme, Orange Spice Thyme and Lime Thyme.

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