

This brochure has been prepared to give property owners and tenants some basic information about reestablishing good turf, after the City of Madison construction and reconstruction projects.

Due to Madison's geographic location, the City has to limit its street and sidewalk construction projects to the summer season. The City however, does make every effort to restore the disturbed areas, although establishing good turf in hot summer months is difficult. All City contracts contain requirements for the contractor to place humus bearing topsoil and to sow a high quality seed mix. Moisture is necessary of course to germinate the grass seeds. This can be difficult to accomplish during the hot and dry periods since germinating grass seeds and young seedlings are very susceptible to injury and death due to lack of soil moisture. Property owners and tenants can help by watering the newly seeded areas at a fraction of the cost that the City's contractor would require. Keep the new seeding moist. Water lightly every day until the grass has been mowed once or twice. Then water more heavily and less frequently. When property owners and tenants assist in this manner they are also helping to reduce the overall cost of the project involved.



One of the most common complaints from residents is the presence of weeds shortly after grass seeds have been sown. The typical statement is "The Contractor used weed seeds instead of grass seeds." Weed seeds lie dormant in all soils, some for as many as 20-50 years. The problem arises when topsoil is excavated from one location, loaded, transported, dumped and re-leveled at a new location. The weed seeds that were lying dormant at one location have now been tumbled and redistributed over a new area causing many of them to germinate. When water is applied the weeds begin to grow. Since weed seeds germinate rapidly and weeds grow faster than grass it becomes extremely important that maintenance of the turf area be started early. Property owners and tenants can help with this problem by cutting the weeds every time they mow their lawns. Since most weeds are of an annual variety they will freeze and die at the first hard frost and will not be a problem the following year.

Mowing the turfgrass is the most fundamental and usually the most frequent turf cultural practice and requires some planning. The general health and vigor of turfgrasses are affected by both mowing height and frequency. The mowing schedule should be based entirely on the grass growth rate. The rule of thumb is that you should not remove over 40% of the leaves and shoots of grasses at one time. Since maintaining a lawn height of 2 - 2 1/2 inches is preferable, mow before the grass reaches a height of approximately 3 1/2 inches. Allowing grass to get too tall between mowings does not benefit the grass. Root growth may cease or root tip dieback may occur. This problem is most severe during periods of heat and drought.

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**CITY OF MADISON**  
**Department of Public Works**



This Board of Public Works appreciates the time and effort donated by Robert C. Newman, Professor of Horticulture at the University of Wisconsin, in the development of this brochure.

## **CARE & RESTORATION OF DISTURBED TURF AREAS**