

LAWN RENOVATION

Renovation is a procedure by which an old or poor-quality lawn which may have a high weed population is revitalized into a dense, weed-free lawn. This can often be done without complete tillage and generally involves chemical kill of weeds, followed by over seeding with a desirable grass seed. The best time to renovate a lawn is in mid-August to mid-September although it can be done in early May.

Renovate a deteriorating lawn if the following conditions exist. One, broadleaf weed infestation is too great for satisfactory results from selective weed control. Two, the lawn does not have many perennial grass weeds such as quack grass, nutsedge or bent grass. Three, at least one-half of the lawn is composed of desirable grasses such as bluegrass or red fescue. Fourth, soil conditions are favorable, so that you do not have to add topsoil or other things to amend and improve the soil.

To renovate, first determine and correct the original cause of lawn deterioration. Test the soil pH and nutrient levels. A pH range of 5.5 to 7.5 is desirable for Kentucky Bluegrass lawns, the most common type in Michigan.

De-thatching or core aerating may be required if the lawn is bluegrass sod laid on clay soil and has developed a thatch problem. Kill weeds by using a broad-leaf herbicide such as 2, 4-D plus dicamba. Products containing 2, 4-D plus dicamba include Weed-B-Gon and equivalents.

After several days, remove the dead vegetation with a vertical renovating machine and rake or sweep the area clear. Cultivate by using a core aerator or slicing to provide good seed to soil contact. Reseed with a desirable grass seed mixture. Bluegrasses prefer full sun; red fescue tolerates some shade. Always use fresh seed for the highest germination rates. Some homeowners find that a seed mix will handle conditions best.

Drag a weighted mat over the area seeded to establish good seed and soil contact. Irrigate the area lightly each day for three weeks. The initial irrigation, however, should involve a thorough wetting to a six- inch soil depth.

When a lawn is severely infested with perennial grass weeds such as quack grass, or

has been suffering from severe disease problems, you may wish to burn the lawn out with a non-selective herbicide and reseed the entire area. Herbicides to use include those containing Glyphosate, such as Roundup. There is typically a several week wait before reseeding. Rototill the soil before reseeding.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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