

The Turf Care
Specialists



Is your
Sportsfield
in need of kickstart?

Preparation, Overseeding and Aftercare

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 **BARENBRUG**

In a summer of consistently high temperatures, sports grounds have been subjected to severe amounts of stress.

The challenge now for grounds staff everywhere is to restore their pitches back to their previous glory. Use this as an opportunity to establish drought-tolerant grasses which will help prevent stress and drought from happening again in the future. If areas are left they will soon be colonised by *Poa Annua* from wind blown seed. The weak rooting of these plants will cause this issue to reappear whenever the next period of drought hits. This article will detail some of the ways that this can be achieved.

Preparation

- For successful seeding and germination water management is critical. The soil needs to be adequately re-wetted prior to seeding the use of a penetrative wetting agent such as Prestige Super Fairway wetting agent @ 20 litres hectare in minimum 400 litres hectare should be applied 7-10 days prior to planned overseeding. This contains seaweed as a conditioner to aid plant recovery.
- Irrigate areas if possible or time work around forecast rain.
- Scarify/remove dead material.
- In the run up to an over seed, withhold nutrients. Applying fertiliser can create competition from the existing grasses.
- Optimum temperatures for seed germination:
 - Fescue minimum 10°C, optimum 16-22°C, Ryegrass minimum 5°C, optimum 10-20°C.

Overseeding

- Seed-to-soil contact is everything. Make sure the seed is sown into soil, any seed on the surface is unlikely to germinate.
- Dedicated seed drills allow for a precision application and are fast, a double pass at 45° angle is recommended. However seeding after solid or hollow tining (known as 'Pot Seeding') works just as well - it just takes a bit longer.
- Rates fescue 10 - 20g/m² if drilled, 20 - 40g/m² if drop seeded, ryegrass 10 - 20g/m² if drilled, 15 - 30g/m² if drop seeded.
- Sow below the thatch. Ensure seed is sown deep enough to be just below the thatch layer. Thatch is a very unstable environment for seed germination due to fluctuations in moisture levels.
- If top-dressing is considered do after sowing but avoid excessive after germination.

Aftercare

- Mechanical process such as verticutting reduced/stopped, Height of cut increased
- Chemical - avoid iron sulphate and read label on selective herbicides (before seeding also)
- Fertiliser - FEED! (after germination not before), choose formulation that favours establishment, rooting etc, we recommend an organic base such as Prestige TE Organic 12:6:6 TE @ 35g/m². This is base feed which will last up to 3 months dependent on soil type.
- Ensure adequate irrigation is available until plant is established.

