

Seeding Tips For Maximum Effectiveness

By Bryan Wood

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With the popularity of the TV show “Myth Busters”, there are some myths that need to be evaluated when seeding.

I’ve been seeding turf for over 25 years and my company contract seeds thousands of acres of golf course tees, greens, fairways, and athletic fields each year. With the introduction of new seeding equipment in recent years, operators now have the option of seeding up to 1 ½ inches deep (I don’t know who really would do that). The main key to good seed germination is good seed-to-soil contact, right? Not necessarily. If it’s Bentgrass, Bermudagrass, Ryegrass, Bluegrass, or Fescue, the results are always the same. If you plant the seed too deep it’s not going to grow. Even if you have a bad thatch problem, don’t plant the seed so deep (to get in contact with the soil) that you bury it!

For the smaller seeds such as Bentgrass, Bluegrass, or Bermudagrass, I’ve seen the best germination results when planting around 3/16 to 3/8 inch deep. Even for larger Ryegrass and Fescue seeds, the best germination rates seem to be when planted no deeper than ½ inch deep. If thatch is a problem, go ahead and plant the seed shallow, right into the thatch layer. This will give you the best germination rates, faster germination, and usually a cleaner seeding job. After getting the turf grass re-established, **then** start to tackle the thatch issue. Through verticutting, top-dressing, and coring the thatch can then be remedied with little disruption to play.

So remember, with all the new seeder technology out there.... Just because the seeder will go that deep, doesn’t mean you have to do it.

PS.... Don’t plant the seed up-side-down!