Going For the Green!

It's fall and that means overseeding season is upon us! It may surprise you to know that more lawns in Chandler are overwatered in the winter months than in summer. The option of having a year-round green lawn requires considerable investment in labor, materials and the additional water required. Here are a few tips for establishing a winter lawn this fall. Using the proper techniques can save you money and help avoid spikes in water consumption.

1) Wait to overseed until nighttime temperatures are consistently below 65F - usually mid-October to mid-November.

2) Do not fertilize 4 - 6 weeks before overseeding. This will slow the growth of the Bermuda grass.

3) 2 weeks before overseeding, change the setting on your ET controller to "user programmed, no ET" for your turf stations and cut the watering frequency in half.

4) Lightly verticut lawn areas to allow seed to contact the soil. Blades should only cut 1/4 inch into the soil - deeper will damage Bermuda stolons and rhizomes.

5) Scalp the lawn. Clippings can be used as a top-dressing after seed is spread.

6) Broadcast seed in two directions to achieve even coverage.

7) Cover the seed with 1/4 inch of mulch, clippings from scalping or steer manure to help retain moisture.

8) Water 3 - 4 times a day with just enough water to keep the top 1/2 inch of soil wet. Seed should germinate in about 7 days.

9) When grass in 1- inch tall, reduce watering to once a day.

10) After the second mowing, water once every 2 - 3 days to a depth of 4 - 6 inches.

11) When lawn is established, water once every week - usually after the 2nd or 3rd mowing.

12) If you have ET or 'Smart' controllers, change the setting to "cool season grass". This will take care of watering your winter lawn until late next spring.