



## 2011 TURF TRANSITION SPECIAL

### *Professional Landscape Management*

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#### DESERT SOUTHWEST TURF TRANSITION TIME

The process of overseeding for winter Rye is a labor intensive and dirty process. Many people who are unfamiliar with this process become very concerned about what is happening to their turf areas. In an effort to minimize confusion and controversy, we asked that this process be communicated to those affected.

The overseeding process will actually begin by mowing the grass higher. This will cause the Bermuda to turn brown on the first 1" up from the ground. The lack of a green stalk at this depth will serve two purposes. The first is the ease of seed dropping to the soil for germination and the second is that when it is time to transition back in the spring, it will not be as damaged as traditional scalping which takes grass to 1/2" or to the dirt. Four weeks prior to spreading seed, we will make our first cut to lower the height. The following week the height will again be reduced and the water to the turf will be turned off. The turf areas will begin to brown out and after the last cut, the turf will be approximately 1" tall and the turf will be completely brown.

Within the next week, the seed will be spread and water turned back on. Water will be adjusted for light soaking of the seed for maximum germination. If the seed is allowed to dry out, it will never germinate. With winter Rye, one seed equals one blade of grass. It does not spread or reseed itself. Germination usually begins within 3-5 days. As the Rye gets to approximately the 1" length, areas that did not germinate well will be spot seeded and in some cases mulch will be added to speed germination and growth.

When the new blades of grass have formed roots strong enough to hold themselves in the ground when mowed, we will run the mower to cut the longest blades of grass down, adjust the irrigation to a more conservative level, and fertilize. At this point, most of the turf is green and thickening up. Normally another fertilization takes place before the first frost. Once it is cold enough to frost, nutrient uptake is minimal and fertilizers do not break down as easily. For this reason, overseeding late in the season has less than optimal results and we recommend not overseeding.

#### Not Overseeding Turf?

If you have chosen not to overseed your turf this year, the beginning process is similar as we allow the Bermuda to grow taller in the beginning. Because the night time temperatures will be causing the Bermuda to naturally enter dormancy, we will be lowering the height to about one to two inches in preparation for winter maintenance and in an effort to jump start growth in the spring. We strongly recommend treating these areas with a pre-emergent and post emergent to reduce winter weeds. Allowing the Bermuda to remain naturally dormant and relatively weed free will strengthen the spring rejuvenation. The Bermuda will still grow over the winter, just at a much slower rate. This requires occasional mowing as well. No fertilization is necessary until spring when the night temperatures again rise above the 65 degree average.



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