



# Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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## “Bon Voyage” to Bermuda

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For all of you who have bermuda in your lawn and who have had to idly bide your time because someone at Johnson's told you that spring is not the time to switch from bermuda to fescue ... your time is fast approaching. In just two more months you can begin, but now is the time to learn and become prepared for the task.

At the outset it is important to warn you that killing bermuda is no small task, but if you're up to it then the task begins in August.

In early to mid August the bermuda needs to be killed off with a product such as Hi-Yield Super Concentrate KILLZALL or Roundup. In order for this treatment to be the most effective, the bermuda in your lawn must be actively growing. It is even a good idea to put down a fertilizer application two weeks before you are ready to spray. This, in conjunction with regular watering, will ensure that the bermuda is growing at its peak ... which will cause the grass to take up the treatment much more quickly and you will be more impressed with the results.

Once the first application is done, wait for a week to 10 days and watch the bermuda die out. Then, begin to water the lawn again. The grass that was not killed by the first application will begin to green up. Once the green grass is growing vigorously, it's time for the final application of KILLZALL or Roundup. This process, and the time required, will take you almost all the way to the middle or end of September. Which, by no quirk of fate, is the perfect time to seed cool-season lawns.

Once the bermudagrass is officially gone and you are ready to seed, there are a few pieces of equipment that you will need. The first is your lawnmower and the second is a vertislicer. With the lawnmower, it is important that the dead grass be scalped and any excess raked off. Unless the lawn is simply awful with dips and rises, I would not suggest rototilling for a fresh start. That disturbs too many weed seeds.

Then it's time for the vertislicer which drops seed from a box in front of the machine, followed by a series of blades which cut the seed about 1/2" into the ground. This machine is best used in a crisscross pattern for better sowing of the seed.

After the seed and the New Lawn Starter fertilizer are down, water these in thoroughly but not too heavily. The soil must remain moist until the grass begins to push up. This may mean watering three to four times a day ... but for only five minutes or so. Once the grass begins to come up back off the watering, but water for longer periods of time. This process will encourage deeper root growth.

And after you are finally done, stand back and enjoy the beauty of what you and Mother Nature have created, and just think how free of bermuda your flower beds will be next year!