



Landscape Services

Safety Standard Operating Procedure

(Revised 6/2023)

Formal Garden

Rye Grain Maintenance

This SSOP provides guidance on the safe maintenance of rye grain. As with any equipment or tools, the most basic premise for safe operation is reading and adhering to the manufacturer's instructions and warnings. This SSOP is not a substitute for the owner's manual produced by the manufacturer.

Safety

PPE Required for Ornamental Grass Cutbacks:	Gloves, sturdy footwear, eye protection, hearing protection (if not battery-operated equipment being used)
Scheduled:	Early November through early May
Tools Needed:	Push mower, hedge clippers, scissors, bucket, metal leaf rake and weed pick
Safety Hazards:	Vehicle and pedestrian traffic, lifting, bending, noise, equipment malfunction, hot or cold temperatures, sharp objects and inclement weather.

Early Establishment of Rye Grain

The early establishment of rye grain is critical as we have a small window before the soil temperatures begin to drop making it difficult to germinate new seed. Its in this process that we will be pushing the bed to look its best to minimize void spaces in the bed. The timeframe for early establishment is intended to cover roughly the first four to six weeks after initial water of the rye grain seed.

1. For the first ten days after watering in the rye grain seed from [installation](#), It is important that we monitor what sections of the beds are germinating and which sections are struggling to sprout.
2. If you identify sections within the beds that are not germinating, top dress that section with new rye grain seed.
3. Water in the seed that has been applied to the sparse sections.
4. Repeat steps 1 – 3 until all beds are filled in and appears to be germinating.
Continue to monitor the rye grain from the initial installation. Germination period for rye grain is roughly ten days. We have roughly a three-to-five-week window to get the rye grain established from seed. This timeline puts us roughly into the first week of December and by this time, soil temperatures will begin to dip and bring seed germination to a standstill.
5. Once all spaces have filled in, we can introduce a medium (four to six weeks) release fertilizer to the bed to help encourage green shoot growth and density.

- a. Consult with your supervisor on what N-P-K ratio fertilizer should be applied.
- 6. After any applications of fertilizer, it is important to apply water to the beds to help minimize burn.
 - a. If possible, timing with an upcoming rain event is acceptable but must be done the day prior to the rain event.
 - b. Consult with your supervisor as to timing of fertilizer if relying on a rain even to water in the fertilizer.

General Maintenance of Rye Grain

The general maintenance section of rye grain management is going to cover the timeframe roughly the four to six weeks after initial watering of the rye grain after installation. The maintenance practices for rye grain are an important piece to our bed care as it helps to introduce beneficials into the soil as well as nutrients for the sequential crop rotation that will take place in early May.

This section of the SOP will take you through a one-week cycle of general guidelines to follow to keep a beautiful installation of rye grain.

1. When reporting to the site, take an overall assessment of the beds.
 - a. If you see weeds in the bed, pull them immediately. Do not let weeds invade the rye grain space or your beds.
 - b. Look at the overall health of the rye grain.
 - i. If the plant is beginning to yellow, investigate the plants overall appearance.
 1. Report to your supervisor of any issues within the planting.
 - ii. Check soil moisture content to ensure plants have the correct moisture content.
 - iii. Identify any void spaces that did not infill from seed or plugs.
 1. Depending on timing, we will need to install rye grain plugs which will be grown out in the greenhouse or if the soil temperatures are beginning to rise, we can scratch the soil surface and apply seed.
 - a. Water in either method that you have decided to infill with.
 - c. Ensure that all trash has been removed from the beds.
 - d. All leaves must be removed bi-weekly.
 - i. Under certain circumstances, additional leaf cleanup may be required.
2. Once rye grain gains adequate soil temperatures, routine mowing will need to be scheduled.
 - a. IMPORTANT – Formal Garden rye grain will be maintained on a different schedule than the rest of campus. This should be done as frequently as it needs to be done.
 - b. Our goal is to have a nice even “haircut” on the rye grain promoting the formal look.
 - c. Clippings from the rye grain are intended to be mulched by the mower and left in the bed as a beneficial.
 - i. After completion of mowing, rake out any clumps of clippings to help spread them throughout the bed.
3. Fertilization is a routine piece to the establishment/healthy growth of the rye grain.
 - a. During establishment, we have applied a medium release (four to six weeks) fertilizer to encourage green shoot growth and density.
 - b. You should reapply another round of medium release fertilizer four weeks after initial application.
 - i. Consult with your supervisor on what N-P-K ratio fertilizer should be applied.
 - ii. IMPORTANT NOTE – Do not apply a medium release fertilizer in the month of April. We want to apply a quick release (two to four weeks) fertilizer so that the color rotation that takes place in May is not effected.
 1. Consult with the supervisor on what quick release fertilizer should be applied.

4. During the growing season, if you should have patches of rye grain that are not growing dense, new seed/plugs may need to be installed to help infill the space.
 - a. A quick release fertilizer may be able to be applied to these patches only once consulting with your supervisor.