



Guide to Prepare Soil for a New Hydroseed Lawn

- From the Experts at [GrassMaster.com](https://www.GrassMaster.com)

A great lawn begins long before the first spray of hydroseed. Think of it like prepping a fresh garden bed—it needs proper planning, patience, and preparation. Follow this step-by-step guide to ensure your hydroseed lawn starts off with the healthiest foundation possible.



1. Measure the Area

Before you begin, measure the total square footage of the area you want hydroseeded. This helps estimate the cost of materials, labor, and seed mix, and helps avoid over- or under-prepping.



2. Clear the Area

Remove all existing vegetation:

- Use a non-selective herbicide like RoundUp to kill weeds and grass at the root.
- Wait 7–15 days (or per label) after spraying before disturbing the soil.
- Weed whack or mow the area down low once vegetation is fully dead.

Eliminate all debris:

- Remove rocks larger than an egg, sticks, roots, and any stumps.
 - Clear the surface to bare, native soil.
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3. Assess and Amend the Soil

Understand your soil type:

Soil is made up of varying amounts of sand, silt, and clay. The best base for hydroseeding is loamy soil—crumbly, aerated, and rich in organic matter.



Test the Soil (Optional, but recommended)

- Perform a soil test to check **pH** and **nutrient levels**.
- Lawns in the Pacific Northwest often need **dolomitic lime** to reduce acidity.



Amend as Needed:

- Add 4–6 inches of **weed-free, high-quality topsoil** (especially if existing soil is hardpan, glacial till, or heavily compacted).
- Blend in **organic matter** (composted manure, peat moss, etc.) to improve water retention and aeration.
- A suggested ratio is 1–2” of compost mixed into the top 5–6” of soil.
- For best results, include **lime** and a **starter fertilizer** high in phosphorus (e.g., 16-6-8).



4. Till & Blend the Soil

Depth matters:

- Till the new topsoil and amendments into the native soil to a depth of 5–6 inches.
- Avoid tilling deeper than 6 inches to prevent bringing up new weed seeds or buried debris.

Tip: If your soil is excessively rocky or your yard is large, consider hiring a contractor with a tractor-tiller or roto-darian.



5. Grade & Level

Create a smooth, even base:

- Grade for drainage—ensure the soil slopes away from structures to avoid pooling.
 - Fill in low spots and lightly compact overly fluffy areas with a roller (half-full with water).
 - Rake thoroughly to smooth out ruts or ridges, especially near fences, pathways, and beds.
 - Roll and re-rake the surface the day before hydroseeding to break any crust.
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6. Water Management & Irrigation

Proper irrigation is critical:

- Install and test your sprinkler system before hydroseeding.
 - Ensure full coverage, and check for low-pressure zones or broken heads.
 - Avoid standing water or overly dry patches during initial lawn establishment.
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7. Mark the Area

Before the hydroseed crew arrives:

- Use **spray paint**, **flags**, or **stakes** to mark the boundaries of the lawn area.
 - Indicate obstacles or "no-spray" zones clearly to ensure clean lines and full coverage.
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Special Notes for Unique Soil Conditions

Condition	Recommended Prep
Hard Clay / Compacted Soil	Add at least 4" of sandy loam. Don't waste time amending heavy clay.


Glacial Till / Rocky Soil	Import 6" of quality sandy loam. Avoid tilling—use top dressing only.
Overgrown/Trashed Lawns	Best to sod cut and start over. RoundUp + tilling isn't worth the effort over large areas.
Wet / Soggy Lawns	Regrade to allow runoff or install catch basins. Add winter mix (at least 50% sand) to raise grade above water table by 6".
Rototilled / Excavated Soil	Ready for hydroseed—just lightly rake, level, and roll before spraying.
Heavily Vegetated Soil	Remove vegetation, retain usable topsoil, and rake/roll to prepare.

Final Checklist Before Hydroseeding

- All weeds and vegetation killed and removed
 - Rocks and debris cleared
 - Topsoil imported (4–6" recommended if needed)
 - Amendments mixed in (compost, lime, starter fertilizer)
 - Soil tilled 5–6" deep
 - Graded and sloped away from buildings
 - Surface raked smooth and rolled
 - Sprinkler system tested and working
 - Boundaries marked for spray crew
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Where Hydroseeding Begins

Once your soil is prepped, the hydroseed application is a fast, effective way to start your new lawn. Proper preparation can save you time, money, and headaches—and give your grass the lush, vibrant start it deserves.

 *Prep well, seed once. Enjoy your perfect lawn for years to come.*