



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

## **Hardin County Extension News Release**

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For Immediate Release – May 25, 2017

### **Turf Tips: Patching Lawns**

*By Barb Snyder, OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer*

*Hardin County* – Two types of patching lawns will be discussed in this Turf Tips article, seed patching and sod patching. While spring lawn repair is best done in early spring, it can also be done in mid-August to mid-September. It is during this time that competition from annual weeds is less of a problem.

Commercial products for seed patching of lawns contain a combination of seeds, fertilizer, and mulch. There are a variety of colors and textures in these grasses, therefore you might not be able to match the patch exactly to your lawn. Square up the sides of the damaged spot with a spade and loosen the soil to a depth of 3-6 inches. Keep the level of the soil the same as the surrounding lawn and remove any debris or weeds. Sow the seeds and water them thoroughly. Apply a starter fertilizer containing slow release nitrogen with phosphorus followed by water. Do not use any pre-emergence herbicides or crabgrass prevention chemicals when seeding. Cover the seeding with ½ inch of mulch or a thin layer of soil. Step on or roll the surface for seed to soil contact and to reduce erosion. Keep the area moist until the grass germinates. After germination and before mowing, do not let the patch dry out. Do not mow the grass until it is 3 inches tall. Leave the grass clippings and they will turn to mulch.

Sod patching involves using sod to repair your lawn. This method of lawn patching is easier but more expensive if you have large areas to repair. Small areas are more likely to fit into your budget and give you an immediate lawn. Order sod from your nursery and as soon as it arrives, repair the patch before the sod dries out. If you cannot lay the sod right away, store it in single layers and keep it moist. When using sod for lawn repairs, the damaged spot needs to be squared up and dug down ½ to ¾ inch lower than the surrounding lawn. Cut a piece of sod to fit the damaged area and place it on the prepared soil. Press the sod and add water, then starter fertilizer and water. Sod will stabilize in 10-14 days. In order to check rooting, tug the sod and if it resists, it has begun to grow. Growing rates vary among grass species and it may take several weeks before you can mow the repaired area. Again, do not mow until the grass is 3 inches tall. Instead of raking up the grass clippings, let them remain as a source of mulch.