

MARYLAND SEEDING ASSOCIATION



Setting the Standards of Excellence for the Seeding Industry... Since 1986

MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS 2005

**For Turfgrass Seeding, Erosion Control Seeding,
Temporary Seeding, Meadow Seeding, and Highway Seeding**

MSA-GS-05.0

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Endorsement

The Maryland Seeding Association (MSA) developed its first guidebook for landscape seeding contractors, GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS FOR SOIL PREPARATION/SEEDING, in 1989. In response to new advances in turfgrass management and the need for a more comprehensive guide by its members, MSA thoroughly revised and added several new sections to the original publication and produced MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS '96. The current edition, MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS 2005 (MSA-GS-05.0), includes numerous corrections and updates to the 1999 edition, and is the 5th general revision of the reference.

MSA-GS-05.0 includes detailed specifications for turfgrass seeding, temporary seeding, erosion control seeding, meadow seeding, and highway seeding. Like its predecessors, MSA-GS-05.0 is intended to assist contractors, architects, designers and others who write contracts or specifications for landscape seeding projects. The members of the Maryland Seeding Association endorse the guideline specifications included in MSA-GS-05.0, and encourage their use as models for landscape seeding in Maryland and adjacent regions.

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Excellence is Our Goal

MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS 2005 was developed by seeding contractors, university researchers, and state regulatory personnel. The Maryland Seeding Association believes that if these specifications are used as guidelines by professionals in the seeding industry, our environment will be enhanced and the occurrence of seeding failures will be reduced.

Soil erosion, siltation, and nutrient pollution are major threats to the ecological balance of every stream that leads to the Chesapeake Bay. Although soil disturbances are an inevitable part of the growth of our society, soil erosion and its consequences should not be. Where vegetation is established rapidly, the threats posed by erosion and nutrient pollution can be minimized. And, perhaps just as importantly, the establishment of attractive and functional landscape plantings may further enhance the quality of life of our society. We feel that MSA-GS-05.0 will help to achieve all these results.

It is important to remember that there are no shortcuts to excellence- only the highest quality of materials and workmanship consistently produces excellent results. MSA urges you to become familiar with the range of materials and services that are available before work is begun, and to request copies of seed tags and other material verification as work is completed. Whether you are specifying or bidding work, insist on excellence for every job... and MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS 2005!

Successful Seeding is Our Mission

The Problem Turfgrass can be difficult to grow in Maryland. In this area the native vegetation is predominantly woodland trees and shrubs. Under natural conditions, grassy areas and meadows usually only become established when the trees and shrubs are destroyed, such as after a forest fire. Although grasses and other herbaceous plants are usually the first plants to become established when the forest canopy is removed, the forest quickly returns. Over a period of 5 to 50 years, the grass and herbaceous plants are typically invaded and completely overgrown by trees and shrubs, which then remain the dominant vegetation until the next major environmental disturbance.

Simply put, the problem of turfgrass management is to establish a stand of grass and then to stop the natural ecological succession at that point. To do that, however, requires both technical skill and an awareness of turfgrass ecology. Many features of the environment may require change. The structure and drainage of subsoil may need to be improved. Additional topsoil or organic matter may be required. Rocks and debris may need to be removed. Appropriate grading may need to be established. Nutrient levels and soil acidity may need to be corrected. And most importantly, appropriate species and cultivars of grass must be selected, seeded, and established. Although total control of the environment is rarely possible, attention to the many separate but interrelated factors is crucial to stopping the natural ecological succession at a point where turfgrass is the most environmentally competitive groundcover and, from an esthetic standpoint, most attractive and functional.

The Solution Location is the first factor that must be considered when selecting among turfgrass species, cultivars, and seed mixtures. Maryland is composed of three distinct geographical regions, each with its own combination of vegetation, climate, and soil conditions:

- ~ The Coastal Plain region comprises most of southern Maryland and the eastern shore; the topography is flat or gently rolling; the soils may be silty, clayey, or gravelly, but are most often sandy; the winters are usually milder than the rest of Maryland; long periods of snow cover are rare.
- ~ The Piedmont region of central and northern Maryland is gently to steeply rolling; the soils are typically clayey and sometimes rocky; the winter weather is cold, with occasionally long periods of snow cover.
- ~ The Western Mountain region of Maryland is hilly to sharply mountainous with soils that are often shallow and rocky; winter weather is typically very cold and long periods of snow cover are common; summers are relatively cool.

Depending upon location in the state, the seeding contractor and turfgrass manager can expect quite different topographical conditions, climatic patterns, soil conditions, and pest problems. As much as possible, MSA-GS-05.0 takes into account the environmental differences that occur across Maryland that influence the selection of turfgrass species and cultivars, as well as the methods and seasons of seeding.

Purpose is the second factor that must be considered. Turfgrass seedings can serve many functions, depending upon the use and the level of maintenance which the turf is expected to receive. MSA-GS-05.0 outlines different seed mixtures and seeding techniques for general turfgrass sites and rough turfgrass sites, as well as meadows, temporary seedings, and erosion control seedings. Information about highway seeding (consistent with requirements of the Maryland State Highway Admin.) is also included for reference.

Timing is a third factor for consideration. The environment can be very demanding of turfgrass seedlings, and major modifications to the turfgrass environment can rarely be made without giving special consideration to timing. Grasses and other groundcovers must be seeded at certain times of the year to obtain satisfactory results. Although modifications to seed mixes and seeding methods can often be made to accommodate construction schedules, plants are living things and their basic needs are not negotiable. MSA-GS-05.0 provides proven methods and timeframes for reliable groundcover establishment.

And lastly, as with any science, new developments must always be considered. Advances in turfgrass breeding, pest control methods, soil preparation and seeding equipment, seed mulch materials, and many other factors can dramatically improve the ability of the turfgrass manager to modify the environment and achieve goals that were not previously possible.

Of course, progress also tends to make specifications obsolete, and MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS 2005 has been significantly expanded and updated since our Association developed its first specifications guidebook in 1989. The Maryland Seeding Association has established close contacts with the University of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resource Sciences, the Maryland Dept. of Agriculture Turf & Seed Section, as well as the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) in an effort to keep abreast of changes that affect the seeding industry.

In situations where the specifications of MSA-GS-05.0 do not address certain issues or do not seem appropriate, the user is encouraged to contact the Maryland Seeding Association at 410-320-4126, or the University of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resource Sciences at 301-403-4234, or the Maryland Department of Agriculture Turf and Seed Section at 410-841-5960.

About Maryland Seeding Association

The Maryland Seeding Association (MSA) was formed in 1986 to protect the right of seeding contractors to use water from public hydrants for seeding projects. Shortly afterwards, MSA became a member of the Maryland Turfgrass Council, and hosted the first of its annual educational seminars at the Turfgrass '87 Conference & Trade Show.

Since then, MSA has become the principal advocate of seeding contractors in Maryland and a leader in the turf industry. MSA members include seeding contractors, lawn care and grounds maintenance professionals, landscapers, sports turf managers, sod producers, seed and equipment suppliers, and researchers at University of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

MSA is dedicated to the improvement of seeding methods and technology in Maryland. By uniting vendors, contractors and researchers, MSA promotes excellence in the seeding industry. In addition to maintaining its website and publishing MSA GUIDELINE SPECIFICATIONS 2005, MSA sponsors membership meetings and other events through the year, and supports turfgrass-related events in Maryland.

Regular MSA Membership dues (seeding contractors and designers) are \$125 per year; Associate MSA Membership dues (producers and suppliers) are \$150 per year. If you have questions or would like more information about joining the Maryland Seeding Association, please contact Mike O'Hare at 410-320-4126 or by e-mail at pglandsc@worldnet.att.net.