

# Is Overseeding Really Necessary?

By Ashley Metzger

**M**any HOAs in the Valley plan for overseeding without considering that it is an entirely optional practice. If your HOA doesn't overseed, you can expect your grass to be brown for about 8 weeks between mid-January and the end of March. If you do overseed, the grass goes brown for 2-3 weeks in the fall. Given that your grass goes brown one way or another and that the grass returns in spring, whether to overseed merits real consideration.

Desert Water Agency encourages valley HOAs to skip overseeding and let your grass "go gold" - or dormant - for the winter. This helps conserve water and saves money on seed and extra lawn maintenance. With drought looming, and seed and labor prices at all-time highs, this is a great year to skip overseeding.

For those who are not familiar with the details, overseeding germinates cool-weather grass, in our area that's traditionally rye, over the dormant warm-weather Bermuda grass. Scalping, which is typically step one of overseeding, is cutting dormant Bermuda grass to the ground. This kicks up dust, dried out grass and pollen into the air.

This process is pervasive in the Coachella Valley - and it takes a lot of water. Given that we're a winter-based destination, many communities see overseeding as mandatory, but should they?

The DWA team sees families, businesses and communities stepping up to save water and we hope the trend continues. Canyon Estates, the 79-acre Palm Springs community known for its iconic homes, decided to go gold this year. Their board felt it was the right thing to do and made a lot of financial sense.


Instead of watering every few hours to overseed - they'll just water grass weekly once it goes dormant, around January. Come spring, the grass should begin to green up again.

Canyon Estates is also considering more permanent water-saving opportunities like free efficient sprinkler nozzles from DWA's program. The best thing an HOA can do is to remove aesthetic grass. If the only time a grass gets foot traffic is when your landscaper mows it, it's time to consider replacing it with something less thirsty.

DWA's incentive program currently gives customers \$2 per square foot to replace grass with desert landscaping or artificial turf. Many local residents have switched from grass to beautiful and vibrant desert landscaping. Other incentives available are for smart irrigation controllers, efficient nozzles, high efficiency washing machines and more ([www.dwa.org/save](http://www.dwa.org/save)).

## IF YOUR HOA ISN'T QUITE READY TO REMOVE GRASS AND CHOOSES TO OVERSEED, MAKE SURE IT IS EFFICIENT:

- Check your sprinklers: fix any pressure problems, make sure sprinklers are aimed in the right direction and repair any leaks.
- Start later: overseed in late October or November, you will need less water to germinate the seeds.
- Cover seeds with grass clippings to prevent evaporation and give them shade.
- Water less: keep your seeds moist but not soaked, water a little and often (e.g. five times a day for 1-2 minutes each time). After seeds germinate, reduce the number of times you water each day.

You can find these tips in a print-out available at [www.dwa.org/overseeding](http://www.dwa.org/overseeding). 



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