

**Let the turf seed companies grow your seed, not your lawn!****May 28, 2020**

This is the time of year where Kentucky bluegrass and other cool season grass lawns are growing prolifically and, in some cases, especially when mowing interval is long, seed heads develop. The internet has abundant information describing how you can harvest the seed to save money and fill in the bare spots in your lawn. Unfortunately, this is misleading information and not recommended. While it seems logical to let the lawn grow, cut off the seed heads and disperse them where needed, it's not that simple. Let's describe why and bust a couple of myths.

The majority of cool season lawn seed is grown in Oregon and proximal states. The weather conditions are ideal for grass seed production. Seed from a breeding program, commercial or university, is grown in production fields. It is interesting to note that the seed that is planted in a production field is a product of a field that often looks nothing like the product you purchase. The cross pollination or hybridization of genetically diverse plants creates the uniform seed you purchase. The production field is left unmown so the seed can be efficiently harvested, allowed to dry down in the field and cleaned and processed through specialized equipment to produce the elite seed you purchase. I quote a clip from a gardening internet source *"mowing your own grass seed to reseed your existing lawn or cover bare patches ensures that the new grass you grow will match the grass that's already there"*. **MYTH 1.** The seed you harvest from your lawn will certainly be the same species, but given it is the second or third generation removed from the original genetics used to produce the grass it is highly probable it will look different than your existing lawn. *Producing seed is easy, it's a natural part of grass growth.* **MYTH 2.** Seed production is not easy. To do this on your lawn would require a portion of lawn being unmown (sure that will go over well with your neighbors) for an extended period of time. During that time weeds may also mature resulting in weed seeds in the final product, certainly a negative consequence. Seed production and germination will often be low. To get the overgrown section back into lawn-shape, you will have to slowly decrease the mowing height to limit scalping injury.

Don't be tempted to save a few pennies and grow your own lawn seed. Always purchase blue tag certified seed from reputable dealers and spend the time you would have wasted on attempting to harvest and process seed from your lawn on more enjoyable pursuits.

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