

Double boost for lawn sales The grass IS greener

Two major launches from Johnsons are designed to open up the lawn seed market to new users and drive massive extra sales

Johnson's will unveil two unique products at Glee that will add some genuine excitement to the lawn seed market. In a category that is notoriously confusing for many consumers, One Step and Easy Lawn bring some welcome clarity as well as opportunities to drive sales growth by attracting consumers who have not previously tried making a lawn from seed or have not had much success.

Both products have been meticulously developed and researched by DLF Trifolium, world leaders in turf seed and owners of the Johnsons brand. Although the £18 million UK consumer lawn seed market is largely dominated by own brand products, Johnsons is the market-leading brand and enjoys high consumer awareness.

The brand benefits from the Danish parent company's huge global resources. DLF Trifolium, a co-operative of 5,500 seed growers, had a turnover of Kr 2 billion (around £184 million) in 2004/5, employs 800 worldwide, more than 100 of them in R & D, and devotes Kr. 40 million (more than

£3.6 million) a year to researching and breeding new varieties, predominantly for the professional turf market. DLF varieties take five of the top six varieties in the latest league table produced by the world-renowned Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, West Yorkshire, where long-term independent trials are carried out.

The two new launches are the result of programmes to find new products that are easy to use and offer superior performance benefits to users.

▶ **One Step** is the world's first consumer lawn mixture to combine grass seed with phased-release fertiliser to promote fast germination and early greening.

▶ **Easy Lawn**, developed from a commercial mixture successfully launched two years ago, is the first consumer product to contain small-leaved clovers (known as micro-clovers) that produce a tough, attractive green sward all year round, even in drought. Research has demonstrated improved colour and appearance for microclover mixtures in comparison with standard lawn mixtures.

[Andy Newell, STRI]

Unique - and true added value



Spencer Goodall (left), brand manager for Johnsons Lawn Seed, says One Step and Easy Lawn are great opportunities to build new sales. "Retailers are always looking for products that are genuinely new and have potential for extra sales. These fit the bill perfectly. There are a lot of me-too products out there and there was no point in producing yet another, but these two really are something special. People would normally buy their grass seed and fertiliser separately but in One Step we've put them both together. What could be easier! It's hassle-free and time saving and not expensive when you think about those benefits. The micro-clover in Easy Lawn makes it absolutely unique. Like a number of other people, I wasn't sure about it at first but now I've seen the trials I am totally sold on it. Its performance in drought conditions has to be seen to be believed - it stays a good green when everything else is brown. They are two true added-value products - and the margins are good, too. Information 01386 791113



Microclover to a lawn to summer drought

Easy Lawn is a completely new type of seed mixture designed to produce a lawn that stays green all year round with very little maintenance. Modern grass seed varieties are combined with microclovers to produce a dense hard-wearing sward.

In trials, the mixture proved to have outstanding drought-resistance, staying green without watering.



Easy Lawn with microclovers on the left is much greener in trials compared to grass-only seed mixtures.

The addition of micro-clovers with very, very small leaves, quite unlike the ones most people regard as lawn weeds - offer an additional benefit. They produce their own natural fertiliser, which in turn reduces the need to feed. Deep roots are the key to drought-resistance.

Johnsons say the target users for Easy Lawn will be gardeners who are looking



For new lawns and old, this seed-plus-feed mix will suit busy people

One Step is a mixture of fine-leaved dwarf perennial ryegrasses blended with a nitrogen-rich phased-release fertiliser (NPK 20-5-10). It will be marketed as the perfect choice for busy gardeners who want immediate but top quality results.

The fertiliser's first phase provides the nutrients young grass needs immediately after germination. The second phase kicks in gradually to ensure the grass grows into a dense and even lawn.

Results in STRI trials have been outstanding. Its appearance in the early stages is considerably different to standard grass seed, with around 20 per cent more roots and 25 per cent more ground cover during the establishment period. "You are seeing results in the first week, instead of the usual 7 to 14 days," said Johnsons marketing manager Miranda Chambers. On pack, consumers are advised they can expect emergence within 7 to 10 days under good growing conditions. One Step can be sown between March and October.

The product is also recommended for lawn restoration by 'overseeding' on existing turf, when the sowing rate is reduced from the normal 50g per sq.m. to 35g per sq.m.

The pack itself, specially devised for the 2-products-in-1 process, is designed as a handy ready-to-use shaker bag so no spreader is required. The contents are easily applied through special perforations in the bottom of the pack.

As you can see from the pack visual on the left, the graphics clearly communicate the product's benefits, emphasising that no other fertiliser application is necessary to establish the lawn successfully.

SRP of a 2kg pack of One Step is £18.99.

"We are hoping this will mean new sales for us. It does not replace existing products so there is not much overlap, if any," Miranda Chambers said. "People with less time are prepared to pay a little more for the convenience. They might purchase things less often, but they will buy into real quality."

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lawn that stays green for longer and requires minimum maintenance. It also meets the requirement for a high resistance to wear and tear and suitability for shade. The pack emphasises the product's major benefits - 'green all-year-round', 'less watering, less mowing, less hassle'.

Johnsons believe Easy Lawn's biggest selling point will be its ability to stay green for longer. "This is very important for the conscientious gardener, who worries about the lawn going brown in dry summer conditions. We believe Easy Lawn will become an automatic recommendation in such cases, especially if the threat posed by climate change becomes a reality and summer drought becomes a regular occurrence. It will be ideal for people who can't water their lawns because of a hosepipe ban."

Like One Step, Easy Lawn can be sown between March and October. The grass elements will emerge in 7-10 days in good growing conditions and the clovers will appear within 21-28 days. Sowing rates are 35g per sq.m. for new lawns and 25g. for overseeding.

SRP for a 1.5kg pack is £21.99. A 500g pack will retail at £8.99



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