

Cultivating breaks up the soil for seeding and works pre-applied nutrients down to the root zone where they'll do the most good. In small yards, a rotary tiller does the job just fine, but in larger areas, you'll find that plowing or disking with tractor-drawn equipment will save you a lot of time and effort.

Before cultivating, be sure to remove pieces of plaster, brick, cement, and other debris. Then choose a day when the soil is suitably moist--not wet enough to cake or clod, but not powder dry, either.

Don't over-cultivate. The ideal soil-bed is cultivated only until lumps of marble-size soil result. Never pulverize soil until powdery or dust-like, because over-cultivated soil "runs" when wet and cakes hard after it dries. You'll find that a pebbled surface accepts seed and water much better. Seed settles into the cracks and crevices between the lumps of soil where moisture and warmth are retained and germination is quicker.