# ITEM 765.635 NATIVE SEEDING AND ESTABLISHMENT SQUARE YARD

DESIGNER INSTRUCTIONS:

* This item is intended to be used mix in conjunction with 765.21 Annual Cover Crop for Native Seeding (when applicable and necessary); 765.4xx Native Seed Mix (TBD); and, if required for location and project intent, 765.664 Mowing for Native Seed Establishment.

Work shall conform to the relevant provisions of Subsections 765 and 767 of the Standard Specifications and the following:

The work under this item shall consist of seeding, mowing, and other care to establish a stand of grass in the areas shown on the plans or as required by the Engineer. For the purposes of these specifications, the term “grass” shall apply to all the forbs, grasses, sedges, and rushes included in the materials.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Seeding shall be done by a company having a minimum of five years of experience with native seed establishment. Prior to beginning work, the seeding Contractor shall furnish proof of qualifications to the Engineer for approval. Proof of qualifications shall include providing documentation (photos and contacts) to demonstrate knowledge and expertise with native seeding and establishment and proof of having completed successful native seeding projects.

## SEEDING SEASON

Seeding seasons for native mixes is April 1 - May 15 and October 1 - December 1 for dormant seeding. Written approval must be obtained for seeding outside the seeding season and, if approved, the permanent seed rate shall be increased by 50%.

Seeding season for cover crops shall be grain oats January 1 – July 31 and grain rye August 1 – December 1.

## MATERIAL AND SUBMITTALS

**Seed Mixes and Submittals** shall be per the item(s) for permanent and annual (cover crop) seed mixes.

**Compost Blanket**, if used, shall meet the material and submittal requirements for that item.

**Hydromulch** shall be wood fiber or straw applied per the Standard Specifications and at the rates specified below and per the manufacturer.

A certified statement shall be furnished, prior to start of work, to the Engineer by the Contractor as to the number of pounds of hydromulch, tackifier, and seed, per 100 gallons of water and as applicable to products used. This statement should also specify the number of square yards of seeding that can be covered with the solution specified above.

**Fertilizer**

No fertilizers shall be applied.

**Water**

Water, including hose and all other watering equipment required for the work, shall be furnished by the Contractor to the site at no additional cost. Water shall be suitable for irrigation and free from ingredients harmful to plant life. All plants injured or work damaged due to the lack of water or the use of too much water shall be the Contractor's responsibility to correct.

## SEEDING

Hand broadcast method shall be used for all areas smaller than half an acre and when specified on the plans for areas over half an acre. Include note for manual broadcast on plans.

Seeding shall occur within 72 hours of placement of loam and final grading or the Contractor shall propose a reasonable, alternative schedule that shall be approved by the Engineer.

**Surface Preparation**

No seeding or soil preparation shall be done if soils are muddy or dry and compacted. Bare soils shall be raked to remove large stiff clods, lumps, brush, roots, stumps, litter and other foreign matter. Ruts and depressions shall be filled with additional loam or compost and the soil shall be re-graded to a relatively smooth finish corresponding to the required grades.

When seeding over existing or compacted soil or soil that has sat bare for more than 30 days, surface will be prepared by tilling or raking to a minimum depth of 2 inches prior to seeding and prior to Compost Blanket application (when applied).

Surface preparation shall be compensated for under for loam placement or topsoil rehandled and spread as appropriate to the project.

Jute or coir mesh, when specified in the contract, shall be placed after seeding and per the Standard Specifications and the manufacturer’s instruction.

Surface preparation shall be approved by the Engineer prior to seeding.

**Seeding over Various Substrates**

Loam: Seeding shall occur within 72 hours of loam placement to prevent loss of topsoil. Seed shall be manually broadcast for areas less than half an acre (each area, not cumulative area) and when specified on the plans. Broadcasting shall be immediately followed by hydromulching as specified below. When not specified on the plans, larger areas may be hydroseeded as specified below.

Compost Blanket: Compost Blanket shall be applied as specified under that item. Seed should be hand broadcast at the same time as compost application to ensure a thin cover of compost over seed.

When seeding is done after application of Compost Blanket the rate shall be increased by 50%. If the Compost Blanket is applied after December 1, seed shall be broadcast or hydroseeding over the compost in the Spring and the rate increased by 50% specified under Seed Application.

Compost Mulch over Modified Rock: Compost Mulch and seed shall be applied as specified under that item. No hydromulch is required.

**Cover Crop**

Cover crop shall be used when seeding out of season, when specified with the permanent native seed mix under that item, and as required to prevent erosion until the permanent seed establishes.

A cover crop should not be used with a steep slope mix or other permanent mix which already contains either cereal rye or oats in the composition of the mix. A cover crop is not necessary for wetland seeding and is not typically necessary for soil stabilization when seeding in conjunction with a compost blanket application.

**Seed Application**

All seed shall be mulched as specified herein.

Seed application shall be by broadcast seeding or by hydroseeding as described below.

Broadcast Seeding

Seed shall be broadcast spread using a cyclone or whirlwind seeder or hand broadcast. Small or light-seeded species such as bluestem may be mixed with approved filler to achieve an even distribution. Seed shall not be broadcast when wind velocities are greater than 15 mph.

Broadcast seeding shall be undertaken in two separate passes at ninety degrees to each other. One-half the seeding rate shall be applied in each direction (horizontally and vertically). To ensure seed to soil contact with broadcasting of seed, seeding shall be followed by rolling or tracking with equipment approved by the Engineer.

Broadcast seed shall be mulched with weed-free straw mulch unless seeding is done as part of Compost Blanket in which case it shall be as specified above under seeding with Compost Blanket application. Hydromulching shall be as specified under Hydromulching.

Hydroseeding and Hydromulching

Hydroseed and mulching shall be per the manufacturer’s directions and as follows.

Hydroseeding shall only be used for sites over half an acre in size or with permission of the Engineer.

Tank and hoses shall be cleaned from all previous hydroseeding and hydromulching projects. Seed shall be mixed into the slurry immediately before application and slurry applied within 30 minutes after seeds have been placed in the tank. Once seed has been placed in the tank, tank shall be agitated only enough to mix the seeds and keep slurry from separating.

A 2-step process shall be used for seeding in conjunction with hydromulch. Seed shall be applied with 500 lbs/acre of hydromulch in the first pass. A second pass with 1,000 lbs/ acre of hydromulch shall be applied in a second pass. Each pass shall be applied in a different direction.

Once the seed has been added to the tank mixture a one-hour time limit is set for spreading the mixture on the soil. Once the one hour has passed the excess mixture must be discarded.

For broadcast seeding, hydromulch shall be applied immediately following seeding at a rate of 1,000 lbs/acre. Tank shall be cleaned from any previous hydroseeding.

## CARE DURING GERMINATION AND ESTABLISHMENT

Contractor shall care for seeded areas as necessary for successful germination. Care will include watering and weed control as necessary to achieve establishment of the specified seeded species after one growing season as specified below.

The contractor shall maintain the stand of grasses to ensure healthy growth of the seeded species. Work shall include mowing or weed-whacking for weed control, watering if necessary, and removal of invasive plants.

Watering shall be sufficient to achieve soil moisture to a depth of 2 inches or more and such moisture is uniform. Method of watering shall not erode or damage soil or grassed surfaces.

General Weed Control: Unless otherwise directed, mowing shall be as specified under Mowing for Weed Control for seed establishment. Weeds shall be mowed prior to weeds setting seed (by the end of July unless otherwise approved).

Control of Invasive and Aggressive Weeds: Invasive and aggressive weeds, including but not limited to mugwort, ragweed, knapweed, foxtail, crabgrass, and chicory must be cut or treated prior to going to seed. Herbicide treatment must be coordinated with MassDOT. Undesired species (such as chicory) introduced due to use of incorrect seed mix shall be removed at the Contractor’s expense.

## MOWING FOR WEED CONTROL

Mowing for weed control shall be completed after weeds have sprouted and show leaf and bud growth, but prior to setting seed, generally between July 7th and August 1st, unless directed otherwise by the MassDOT Landscape Architect and the Engineer.

Mowing height shall be as needed for weed control, generally to a height of 8 inches and not below 4 inches, unless directed otherwise. Mowing shall be with a brush hog mower or string trimmer other approved equipment. Conventional lawn mowers which cannot achieve the appropriate cut shall not be used.

Contractor shall give 48-hour notice prior to mowing work. Mowing shall only occur in dry sunny weather. Litter pickup should occur prior to mowing in all areas. If required, cut grass shall be raked and removed. Litter pickup and raking and removal of grass shall be incidental to the work.

Mowing equipment shall be approved by the Engineer prior to work.

## OVER-SEEDING

Areas of bare ground greater than 2-3 feet in diameter shall be over-seeded with the specified mix during the appropriate season for seeding. Where required for overseeding mowing shall be as close to the soil as possible. Soil that is compacted shall be raked or otherwise roughened prior to over-seeding.

Over-seeding rates and methods shall those specified above under Materials and Methods. Following over-seeding, soil shall be lightly tamped to ensure seed to soil contact and areas shall be mulched with straw mulch and watered with a fine mist to moisten soil to a depth of at least 2 inches.

Over-seeding, mulch, watering, and all work for over-seeding shall be incidental.

## DETERMINING SATISFACTORY GRASS ESTABLISHMENT

A well-established stand of the specified seeded species as determined by the Engineer and the MassDOT Landscape Architect will be required for Final Acceptance. The expectation is that an acceptable number and variety of the desired permanent seeded species (not the cover crop) will be visible. Generally:

* A minimum of 75% coverage by the specified permanent seeded species after one growing season. Of that percentage, generally, depending on the mix species:
  + At least 3 types of the permanent seeded grass species shall be visible.
  + At least 3 species of wildflowers shall be visible.
* There will be no significant gaps or bare soil (generally 2-3 feet in diameter or greater).
* There will be no more than 25% coverage by weed species.
* All soil shall be stabilized and there shall be no channeling or erosion.
* There will be no invasive or aggressive species within the stand at the time of acceptance.
* There shall be no evidence of seed from non-native mixes (i.e., clover) due to failure to clean the hydroseeding tank or using incorrect mix.

Invasive and aggressive weeds (such as mugwort, ragweed, knapweed, and chicory) must be cut or treated prior to going to seed for Interim Acceptance. Herbicide treatment must be coordinated with MassDOT.

A warm-season grass mix with perennials will not have uniform growth. A uniform stand of grass may indicate use of an incorrect mix.

## ACCEPTANCE OF SEEDING AND ESTABLISHMENT WORK

Conditional Acceptance shall be based on proper application of seed as specified herein.

Interim Acceptance of Care. Seeding will be inspected by mid-July to assess germination and Establishment conditions as described above. When necessary for Interim Acceptance, areas shall be mowed prior to weed species producing seed and as specified above under Weed Control. ***Areas requiring weed control that are not mowed prior to weed seed dispersal will not be approved for Interim Acceptance.*** Seeding that shows good germination and is determined by the Engineer and Landscape Architect to not require weed control at time of inspection shall be accepted for Interim Acceptance payment.

Final Acceptance of Establishment shall be given upon satisfactory Establishment as described above.

If the seeded area fails to meet the requirements of Establishment by the end of the growing season, contractor shall propose and implement remediations and site shall be inspected during the following growing season after July 1st. All remediation shall be at the contractor’s expense.

## METHOD OF MEASUREMENT AND BASIS OF PAYMENT

Native Seeding and Establishment will be measured for payment by the square yard, complete in place.

Native Seeding and Establishment will be paid at the Contract unit price by the square yard upon Conditional, Interim, and Final Acceptances as described above. This price shall include all submittals, seeding, rolling to ensure seed-to-soil contact, weed control other than mowing, water, over-seeding, labor, materials, equipment, and all incidental costs required to complete the work of establishing a satisfactory stand of grass.

Native seed and cover crop mixes shall be compensated under the respective items.

Site preparation, including raking, tilling, removal of debris and stones, and other work to the prepare site for seeding shall be compensated under loam placement or topsoil rehandled and spread as relevant to the project. If used, Compost Blanket shall be compensated under the respective item.

Option1: Mowing for weed control will be paid as specified under Item 765.664.

Option2: Mowing for weed control will be incidental to this item.

Schedule of payment shall be as follows:

30% upon Conditional Acceptance

20% upon Interim Acceptance of Care, except this amount will be reduced to zero and final payment will be reduced accordingly when areas requiring weed control are not mowed as specified in the Interim Acceptance criteria.

50% upon Final Acceptance of Establishment