



Care and Maintenance of New Sod

Watering

When freshly cut, sod contains enough moisture to last through transport and planting. Once the sod arrives at the site and installation begins, the sod will begin drying out. Proper watering during and after installation is essential to the health of your new sod lawn.

Within 30 minutes after installation, begin watering the newly installed sod with a hose-end nozzle or portable sprinkler. Apply enough water (at least 1") to saturate the sod and the soil up to 4" beneath the surface. You may need to begin watering before installation is complete for large areas or if the weather is especially hot and dry.

After installation is complete, give the sod a deep and thorough watering twice per day. Watering in the morning and afternoon is best; evening watering is not recommended as it can lead to fungal growth and disease. When watering, saturate the soil up to 1" below the surface but do not allow puddles to form. You can use a screwdriver or pocket knife to check the saturation of the soil; if the tool goes into the soil easily, it is sufficiently wet.

The sod should begin rooting into the soil within a few weeks. Several weeks after installation when the sod is well rooted and established, you can reduce the frequency of watering and water more deeply to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.

Watering Tips

- Pay close attention to corners and edges to make sure sprinklers aren't missing these areas. Water with a hose-end sprinkler in any areas missed by an installed irrigation system.
- Check areas near buildings for dry spots due to reflected heat and provide extra watering as needed.
- Irrigation systems and hose-end sprinklers will provide more uniform coverage than watering by hand.
- Ensure that any in-ground irrigation systems are properly maintained and adjusted. Inspect sprinkler heads to make sure they are aligned correctly. Adjust timing to account for seasonal and weather changes, such as more frequent watering during dry periods and less during rainy periods.
- Roots will grow as deep as the water supply in the soil, so deep watering is preferable to shallow watering.

Mowing

Wait until the underlying surface is firm enough (about 1 week after installation) and the sod has grown long enough to need mowing (about 3.5" to no more than 4.5"). Use a walk-behind power mower with sharp blades and set the cutting height at 3". After the sod is fully rooted (at least 3 weeks) a riding mower can be used. Never remove more than 1/3 of the growth. Grass clippings left on the lawn will naturally return nutrients to the soil as they decompose.

Fertilization

Keep your lawn healthy by fertilizing three to four times per year. A fertilizer that provides slow or controlled release of nitrogen is recommended, especially for spring or fall applications. Fertilizer numbers shown below indicate the percentage of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). Follow the manufacturer's instructions and be sure to thoroughly water in the fertilizer after application.

Recommended Fertilization Schedule:

- Early spring/April 1 (if you did not fertilize in late fall) – 24-0-11 fertilizer
- Late spring/May 31 – 30-0-9 fertilizer
- Late summer/September 1 – 24-0-11 fertilizer
- Late fall/October 31 – 24-0-11 fertilizer