

Sod Care Instructions 2024

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Sod provides an instant lawn, but requires a little more care than an established lawn requires. New sod has shallow roots, which need time to establish in the soil. Proper watering, fertilizing and maintenance are vital to ensuring your new sod will endure long after it is installed.

Watering

New sod requires more water than an established lawn because its roots need consistent moisture. For the first seven to 10 days, new sod requires five to 10 minutes of watering, two to three times daily. Provide enough water to soak the first few inches of soil. For the next seven to 10 days, reduce watering to once per day, making sure to soak the top 1/4 inch of soil. After three weeks, you can reduce watering to every other day, soaking to a soil depth of about 1/2 inch. When your sod has been growing for about four weeks, the roots should be established enough to reduce watering to once or twice per week. If temperatures climb above 24°C at any point during the first four weeks, increase watering to two or three times per day to prevent drying. Water your new sod in the morning or the evening, when temperatures are cooler. Watering during the hottest parts of the day can burn your new grass. We found that watering in the evening is strongly more effective. Watering in the morning is not recommended as it tends to burn the grass on very hot days.

Fertilizer

Most sod is fertilized prior to harvesting, so it usually does not need to be fertilized for at least 60 to 90 days after installation. Fertilizing before this time causes yellow patches in your lawn because the shallow root system of the sod can't absorb the nutrients, causing nitrogen to leach into the soil. After a minimum of 30 days, you may apply a granular fertilizer with a nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium ratio of 16-16-16 at a rate of 6 1/2 pounds per 1,000 square feet of lawn, or 10-20-20 at a rate of 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet of lawn. Make sure you apply the fertilizer when the ground is dry, and spread it evenly over the lawn. Water the lawn thoroughly after application. It is recommended to use less fertilizer than instructions dictate to avoid over-fertilizing.

Mowing

New sod should not be mowed immediately. Typically you should mow your new lawn about 2 to 3 weeks after installation, but not if the grass is less than 3 inches tall. Ideally, new sod should grow to at least 4 inches before mowing. Avoid cutting it too short. Make sure your mower blade is sharp and never cut more than one-third of the blade length. Ensure your mower is at the highest possible setting before mowing. You may also use the weed-wacker to cut high portions.

Use

Avoid walking on your new sod for at least 10 days, and keep foot traffic to a minimum for three to four weeks after installation, particularly if conditions are overly dry or wet. New sod needs to establish its roots and disturbance can affect the success of this process. If you must walk on the sod, try to use a different route each time so that you are not treading on the same area. To prevent others from walking on your new lawn, mark a perimeter with stakes and string or tape.

Weed Control

It is recommended you contact any weed control company that offers free touch ups to regularly spray for weeds and fertilize the sod to maintain the sod.

Additional Information

Watering Tip #1

Pull back a corner of the turf and observe how moist the soil is underneath before watering. If it is sand colour it is far too dry, if it is saturated and muddy you have been watering too much. The soil should look damp.

Watering Tip #2

Make certain the entire lawn is receiving water. Corners and edges are particularly vulnerable to drying out and are easily missed by many sprinklers. These sections dry out faster than the center portion of the new lawn. Areas near buildings also dry out faster and may require more water.

Watering Tip #3

Runoff may occur on some solid or sloped areas before the soil is adequately moist. To conserve water and ensure even irrigation, turn off the water if runoff begins. This means the soil is temporarily too saturated to accept more water. Wait 30 minutes to an hour and restart watering, repeat as needed. For the next two weeks keep the soil below the turf moist with daily (or more frequent) waterings of approximately 0.6cm each. Increased watering may be required during hot, dry, or windy periods.

Watering Tip #4

As the roots of the turf begin to penetrate the soil, it will be difficult to pull back the corner to check beneath the turf to see if water is penetrating the soil, but you can still use a sharp tool to check moisture depth by pushing it through the turf and into the soil.

Watering Tip #5

Water as early in the morning as possible to take advantage of the grasses normal growing cycle. Morning is ideal because of the lower wind speeds and less water is lost to evaporation.

Watering Tip #6

Infrequent and deep watering is preferred to frequent and shallow watering. Roots will only grow as deep as their most frequent available water source.

Watering Tip #7

Avoid hand watering because it cannot provide uniformity. The only possible exception to this guideline would be the need to water the surface of the grass to cool it, or to provide additional water near buildings or other heat-reflected surfaces (such as near a driveway to building surface reflecting evening sun).

Watering Tip #8

In ground systems require professional installation, routine adjustments and proper maintenance to be effective. The system must be watched and monitored for appropriate timing during different parts of the season. A frequent problem is when sprinkler heads get out of alignment.

Watering Times after Installation

Sod during ideal conditions will take 3-4 weeks to attach to the soil below. Avoid heavy traffic and cutting the grass too short.

Spring – **Water Daily** in the early morning or late evening. If there is 15mm of rain or less forecasted still water as depending on sun, wind, and temperature it may not be the daily required amount. Lawn can be cut to the lawn mowers medium setting.

Summer – **Water Twice Daily** in the early morning and late evening. Areas that are in evening shade can be watered once daily. Areas in full evening sun require extra watering and attention to prevent drying out. Lawn should be cut to the highest setting of the lawn mower. The roots of Kentucky Bluegrass need shade during the hot summer months and a longer cutting length of 3 inches plus is recommended. During heat-wave events watering three times daily may be required for new sod.

Fall – **Water Every Second Day** in the morning or evening. Once temperatures drop below 10°C watering is required less frequently.

Once the sod is well rooted watering requirements drop. However, the grass should always be maintained for proper moisture. Kentucky bluegrass can survive the cold however, does not do well during hot dry summer months. Watering is always required in summer months even after the sod is well rooted.

Always avoid leaving clumps of grass after cutting. You can rake up these areas or use a blower to spread it out.