



How To Care For Your New Sod Lawn

(Summer Article)

THE FIRST 14 DAYS ARE CRITICAL

The establishment of your new sod lawn is easy. Sod should be laid on your dry soil **THE VERY DAY IT ARRIVES!** If temperatures are above 90° the soil should be moistened the day before to cool soil temperatures and just before install. **DO NOT OVER WATER** so you or the installers are not working in muddy conditions. After the sod is installed the initial watering should soak the sod and hydrate the soil below many inches. All you have to do is water it and stay off. Keep the lawn moist at all times, preferably by frequent light sprinklings. The watering process should be repeated three times a day. **DURING THE HOTTEST MONTHS OF THE YEAR, 80° PLUS**, at approximately 8 AM, 11 AM and 2 PM (early, mid- morning and early afternoon), every day. **DON'T LET THE LAWN DRY OUT!!!** Remember the key is to **KEEP IT MOIST, NOT SOAKED AND DO NOT LET IT DRY OUT.** Too much water causes fungus.

MOWING YOUR LAWN

A new sod lawn should be mowed for the first time between 12-14 days. Turn off your water for 1 to 2 days to firm the soil to allow foot and mower traffic. After your first mowing water **ONCE A DAY** at 8 AM for the following week. After your second mowing water **EVERY OTHER DAY** at 3 AM and adjust watering time to meet seasonal conditions. Delaying the first cutting allows for too much shading, blade widening and possible overgrowth. Set your lawn mower to mow $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of the height of the blade off, lowering a setting each mowing until the lawn is at mowing height. (Fescue sods are cut at 2-2.5" for home use) Never remove more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the grass blade length at any mowing. Two mowing's in a week are sometimes needed during the first or second mowing to get desired blade height. Lawn mower blades should always be kept sharp to prevent torn grass, which develops unsightly white blade tops.

WATERING YOUR LAWN AFTER THE FIRST 3 WEEKS

Watering is most effective if done during early morning hours, 3 AM, when sunlight and heat cannot cause excessive evaporation. After your lawn becomes established it requires approximately 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches of water per week, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch every other day during the heat of the summer. Spring and fall may only require once or twice a week watering depending on weather conditions. Cut water back during the winter. Sometimes your lawn will only require watering once or twice a month, depending on weather conditions. The soil should be soaked completely when watered. During the active growing season water should penetrate at least 6 inches into the soil to insure deep rooting. Soil types also are a large factor in how long and how often you water your lawn.

FERTILIZING YOUR LAWN

A fertilizing should be applied prior to you laying the sod. (Example: All-purpose fertilizer 15-15-15 or 16-16-16 at a rate of 1lb per 100 sqft) Once established, the lawn will need regular fertilizing. Application of fertilizer should provide the nutrients needed to give the sod a healthy look all year round. This year round fertilizing could possibly be applied every six to eight weeks or longer depending on type of fertilizer, water and soil type. We also recommend using organic fertilizers when mixed with synthetic fertilizers.

Remember when you see a lawn that looks great its because the owner has done a few simple things with consistency: Proper watering, mowing, and fertilizing are the keys to keeping your lawn looking healthy and the weeds to a minimum.

WEED CONTROL

Weeds will appear in you new lawn. They come from seeds which have lain dormant in the ground or which have been carried in by wind or birds. Growing good healthy grass can best control these weeds. Grass that is properly watered, mowed, and well fertilized provides competition for weed plants to gain a stronghold. However, there are chemical remedies that will aid in the weed control of a mature lawn (after 3-4 mowings), Post-emergent for grassy weeds or broadleaf weeds. Some chemicals are temperature sensitive be sure to check your labels. Pre-emergent can be used to keep crabgrass, spurge and approximately 35 other weeds out of your lawn. (First applied at late winter early spring) Should your lawn ever become damaged or have bare spots, reseed or sod immediately to prevent competitive weed growth from becoming established.

LAWN DISEASES and INSECTS

The most common lawn diseases are known as Brown Patch, Dollar Spot, Rust and Fusarium. A lack of water can cause stress on your lawn, which will weaken it and make it more susceptible to disease. Over watering and too frequent watering, are most often the causes of lawn diseases. These can be checked and controlled with fungicides. (June thru Aug.) Lawn moths, cut worms and grubs are also very common and they are controlled with insecticide granules. (May thru Sept.)