

SOD PREPARATION AND INSTALLATION GUIDE

PREPARATION

Root health is everything when it comes to sod. Improving the soil before planting will return its value for the life of the sod. No amount of post-installation feeding and care can replace proper site preparation, because it will nurture the sod's root structure and will determine the beauty of the final result.

We recommend the following guidelines for sod site preparation:

- Clear the site of any debris, including buried stumps, wood chips, cement, bricks, wood, rocks, sticks or other debris exceeding 2-3 inches in diameter.
- Rough grade the entire area to prevent drainage problems and slope. Slope should be away from buildings, and low lying areas should be filled in. If rough grade reveals more debris, do a second debris sweep of the site.
- Till to a depth of 2 inches if possible, this will allow for adequate water movement.
- Finish grade the site.
- The site is now ready for turfgrass. The effort invested in properly preparing the surface will deliver a higher degree of density and uniformity, as well as less need for water, fertilizer and pesticides. The area will also recover much more quickly from wear.

OPTIONAL STEPS

If you want to go above and beyond for your turf, here are some additional steps you can take that aren't required, but would certainly aid in your sod establishment.

- Topsoil can be added to provide a nutritionally rich surface, up to 4-6 inches in depth. The topsoil layer should be tilled into the existing soil for maximum performance.

NOTE: Deep tilling can bring up weeds, so soil should be treated with a pre-emerge weed killer prior to sod installation if surface is deep tilled.

- Determine the soil pH with a chemical soil test. pH level should ideally be 6.0-6.5. Acidic soils (pH of 6 and below) can be balanced by adding lime. The type of lime and amount is determined by the soil acidity.
- Apply a starter fertilizer with a phosphate rate recommended for the sod, and till into the soil prior to laying the sod.
- Post-installation, roll the area with a lawn roller to firm and settle the soil on the surface. If low spots are evident, fill them in. If possible, allow the surface to settle further with rain water or irrigation.

REMEMBER: Prompt installation on the day of delivery is crucial to a strong beginning for sod. Water within 30 minutes of installation. For larger areas, water in sections as sod is installed.

For years to come, your investment in soil preparation will yield a high return!

INSTALLATION

- Start along a straight line, like a driveway or walkway.
- Lay the sod in pieces with alternating seams, as if it is brick or tile. This prevents water from draining in one spot and eroding the soil along the seam line.
- Butt together all joints tightly, with no overlapping or gaps.
- Avoid putting small sod pieces at the edges or near buildings, they will tend to dry out.
- Use a large, sharp knife or landscaping tool to cut pieces of sod to fit around flower beds or borders.
- Water sod within 30 minutes of installation, giving it about an inch of water.
- To increase contact of roots with base soil, sod can be rolled after installation. Rolling also eliminates bumps and air pockets. Good preparation may eliminate the need to roll following installation.
- For the first 2-3 weeks, avoid heavy or concentrated use of the new surface, such as walking on the new sod, rough housing or placing anything heavy on it. The root system is delicate at this point, so any disturbance can disrupt root establishment.
- Mow the sod when it exhibits resistance when you pull at the edges of the sod pieces, indicating it is taking root. Mowing too soon before sod has started to tack down may displace sod.

MAINTENANCE

Sod significantly increases property value. With proper care, it will remain a great asset for years to come.

We recommend the following guidelines for sod maintenance:

- Water sod with 1 inch of water within 30 minutes of installation.
- For the first two weeks, water daily, enough to keep turf moist. This will encourage the root system to establish.
- After two weeks, opt for deeper, less frequent watering. We recommend 1" of water per week for both Bermuda and Zoysia grasses. Be sure the water is absorbed into the soil and does not run-off. If run-off occurs, water more slowly and take breaks to allow for absorption into the soil. Only water to supplement rain fall shortages.
- Opt for more frequent mowing, and never remove more than 1/3 the height of the blade of grass in a single mowing. Avoid scalping the grass by cutting it too short.

NOTE: Keeping your grass mowed will help it keep a strong root structure and fill in bare spots, growing more lush and dense than turf mowed infrequently.

- Fertilize with the frequency and product ideal for your sod variety. Check our website to get the specific fertilizer ratios recommended for each sod variety.