

New Sod Care and Maintenance Guide

Preparation

- Remove debris like rocks, sticks, etc. from the area
- Grade the lot with a proper slope so that run-off will drain away from your house
- Work the soil 4-6 inches deep with a rototiller.
- Add 3-5 cubic yards (per 1000 sq. ft.) of organic soil (compost) amendment.
- Rototill again to a depth of 4-6 inches
- Level and smooth the soil with a rake, working out lumps, bumps and dips.
- Lightly rake a balanced fertilizer high in phosphorous and potassium into the soil
- If soil is loose, (footprint is more than 1 inch deep) you can roll it to increase firmness.
- Soil surface should be approximately 1 inch below sidewalks or driveways to allow for the sod thickness.

Installation

- Lay sod as soon as possible after it is delivered. In hot weather, it should be laid immediately.
- Begin by laying sod along a straight edge, such as a driveway, butting sod pieces “joints” tightly together but not overlapping. Alternate each row so the joints are staggered like a row of bricks.
- Use a sharp knife to cut and shape sod to fit around curves, trees, etc.
- Water within 30 minutes of starting the installation (even if you’re not finished laying all the sod).
- Once installation is complete, roll the entire lawn to force out air pockets below the sod.
- Water again after all the sod is installed, wetting the soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches.

Care and Maintenance

- In cool weather, water new sod daily and in hot weather, water a minimum of twice daily. Do this for the first 10-14 days, watering about 1/4 inch (just to the point of saturation) each time.
- Keep pet and foot traffic off the grass for the first 10 days and to a minimum for the following four weeks.
- You should be able to mow your new sod after 14 days. Check to be sure the sod is rooted down (can’t pull up the corners) before mowing. After that, follow these mowing height guidelines: Bermudagrass ½ to 1 ½ inches

- After the first 10 to 14 days, cut back watering to 2 to 4 times per week, depending on the weather. Your new sod must be kept sufficiently moist to establish a strong root system, but should not be overwatered.
- Maintain an adequate fertilizer program. Most grass types will need 3 or more applications per year. Gardner Turfgrass suggests that you use slow release fertilizers. Ask your local nursery or Gardner Turfgrass representative for recommendations on a fertilizer suited for your area.
- Follow a proper irrigation program based on season and weather. Water deeply (6 inches) and infrequently so that the grass can develop a strong root system, which will make it more resistant to disease and hot weather problems.