



## **Early Sod Care**

Taking good care of your sod after it has been installed is absolutely vital to a lush, green lawn. By following these simple steps, you will be assured a yard that requires minimal future maintenance.

### **First Day Watering**

Your new sod should be soaked with water as soon as it has been laid. The best way to tell if you've watered enough is by taking a few steps onto the turf. If you make deep footprints, your sod has enough water. If the soil seems firm, lift a corner of one of the rolls to inspect it. The soil on the back of the sod should be damp, to wet. If the back of a roll is not damp, water an additional thirty minutes.

### **Second through Fifth Day Watering**

It's very important to check your lawn at least once per day during the week after installation to ensure that there is adequate moisture for the turf to flourish. During hot and/or windy weather, you may need to check for moisture more than once a day. Walk on the new lawn to inspect it. If the soil is soft, and you make deep footprints and if water has puddled in areas, it is too wet. Unlike the first day of watering, you do not want to make footprints. At this point, you should stop watering for a day or two. Once you begin the watering schedule again, water less often, using less water. However, if you walk across your lawn to inspect it and find that the soil is very firm, lift a corner of the grass in several places. The soil should be damp-- not dripping wet or dusty dry.

### **Further Watering**

After about five days, the sod has soaked up water like a sponge, and you must reduce your watering habits. If you do not reduce the amount of water applied to your lawn, you risk drowning the sod. Grass plants will not grow in waterlogged soils. Now is the time to begin stretching out the amount of time between waterings. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, you will need to reset the timer. Watch the color of the sod for watering: green is good, blue-green indicates not enough water, and yellow-tan means the sod is heat/moisture stressed and will go dormant.

### **Signs of Underwatering**

Areas where the grass has wilted, or turned a straw color, have not received enough water. Seeing green grass turn brown almost overnight will get your attention! This is the most obvious symptom of underwatering. The roots and crowns of the grass plant are still alive, and in most cases, new leaves will appear in seven to ten days if immediate action is taken. Another indication of underwatering are the cracks that appear between the rows of sod. Both of these signs of underwatering can be corrected by watering longer than you have been currently, with more water. Temperatures above 80° generally mean more water is needed, while temperatures below 60° mean less water is needed. In the cooler months of March, April, October and November sod needs much less water.

### **Mowing**

Mow your new grass when it needs it. You do not need to stay off of it just because it has been recently laid. You do need to pay attention to the height of your mower. It is very important to not water immediately before mowing, to prevent the mower sinking in and making ruts. To find what the appropriate height of the mower should be based on your lawn's stage of development.



### **How Soon Can I Use the Sod?**

The sod is ready to be used instantly. Be careful because early watering often makes the soil underneath the sod soft, and susceptible to ruts. Making deep footprints when the soil is soft won't hurt the sod, but will make for an uneven lawn in the future. If children play in your yard and turn a corner up, just pat it back down.

### **Weed Killers**

Your new sod does not need any type of weed killers. Should a dandelion or other small weed pop up, pull it out, making sure that you pulled out the root as well. Pulling out roots will ensure that weeds will not return.

### **Fertilization**

Your new lawn does require a starter fertilizer. We suggest 6-24-24, which is an excellent starter fertilizer. I would give your lawn another round of fertilizer 4 – 6 weeks later. During this time, you can weigh your options, and decide if you plan on fertilizing the yard yourself, or hiring a professional service to do it for you. If you plan on fertilizing your sod yourself, go to your favorite garden center, and let them help you set up a fertilization schedule.