

Long Term Sod Care

Conscientious long-term is extremely important in maintaining your investment in sod. Good maintenance habits ward off disease and weeds. Follow these simple instructions for long-term care.

Mowing

From May through September, mow your lawn at 2.5'-3" height. Setting your mowing height higher results in fewer weed problems and healthier turf. From September through November, gradually lower the height of each mowing to a final height of 1.5". Clippings should not be collected, unless they are long and smother the grass. Clippings do not create thatch, but do recycle nutrients back to the lawn.

Watering

Watering to keep grass green is a choice for you to make, but over watering will cause serious problems for your grass. Lawn problems caused by over watering may take two years to appear, and two or more years of hard work and high expense to correct!

Watering Schedules

Ten or twenty minutes of watering everyday is wrong. The correct way to water is very simple: thoroughly, but infrequently. When the soil is dry down to a depth of 5", water long enough to re-wet it 5" deep. The easiest way to determine soil moisture is to purchase a soil probe. A soil probe is a metal tube with one side open and a handle on top. You use the handle to push the tube into the soil, and then pull the tube out to look at the exposed soil and moisture level. Below is a picture of a soil probe:



Another way to determine moisture depth is to use a garden trowel and screwdriver to dig and poke into the soil to determine dryness. Equate how hard you must push on the screwdriver with how dry the soil appears. After some experience, you can quickly walk across your lawn, using your screwdriver to determine if the entire lawn needs water, or just certain sections.

Why You Can't Set and Forget Your Sprinkler System

How often you need to water depends on how fast the soil dries out. Soil type, temperature, wind, amount of sunshine and cloud cover can all impact how quickly soil dries out. A sprinkler system that is set to run on a static schedule cannot take all of these factors into account! You should check your lawn in the afternoon so you can also see if the grass is getting dry. If water is needed, and you have an automatic sprinkler system, set it to operate the next morning. A lawn can be watered anytime, but early morning is ideal as there is usually very little wind. Avoid watering in the late afternoon and evening.



Fertilization

It is important to fertilize on a schedule, whether you hire the work done or do it yourself. When looking at a bag of fertilizer there will be three numbers on the front of the bag each of these numbers represent a nutrient that the plant requires. The first number represents Nitrogen (N), the second number represents Phosphorus (P), and the last number is for Potassium (K). Each of these nutrients affects the plant differently: remember this phrase (UP, DOWN, ALL AROUND). Contact a lawn service provider, or visit a garden center to get set up on a fertilization schedule. We suggest the following program:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pounds Applied</u>	<u>Fertilizer Composition</u>
April 15 th	4	23-3-6 pre-emergent w/ Team Per 1,000 sq. ft.
May 15 th	4	12-4-8 weed & feed w/ Trimec Per 1,000 sq. ft.
July 1 st	3.4	15-2-5 w/ merit Per 1,000 sq. ft.
September 1 st	3.57	28-5-8 w/ micro-nutrients Per 1,000 sq. ft.
November 1 st	4.17	6-24-24 Per 1,000 sq. ft.

Weed Control

If you hire a lawn service, they will take care of your weeds. If you plan to control your weeds yourself, remember there are two types of weeds: broadleaf and crabgrass. For broadleaf weeds like dandelion, visit a garden center to discuss the many ways of applying broadleaf herbicides. Crabgrass herbicides are not needed if your sod is thick, and you have not had a problem in the past.