



## DIY PREPARATION GUIDE

### It's time to prepare your site and soil

Before your turf goes down, site and soil preparation needs to be complete. This is extremely important to ensure the roots of your turf have great soil so they can establish themselves properly. Deep roots mean they can soak up more nutrients so the lawn can thrive.

### Preparing your site in 7 easy steps

- 1** First, remove all existing turf and weeds.
- 2** Use a rotary hoe or spade to turn the top layer of soil over. If your ground is extremely compact or your soil has a clay base, you may require a bobcat to relieve compaction, then apply gypsum to the under soil before the turf goes down so the roots can grow through this layer.
- 3** Contour the levels of the backyard to most effectively run water.
- 4** Clear the entire area of any debris like sticks or stones.
- 5** Cover the area with a good quality top soil. Use a rake to spread the soil evenly to a depth of at least 75mm. We recommend a sandy loam so that the surface can be free draining and easily levelled. If your profile is too sandy then we recommend the application of a well broken down organic mix to make sure that the top soil can hold moisture and nutrients
- 6** Use a roller to firm the soil, but don't compact it. This will create a smooth surface for the new turf. **NOTE:** Your soil preparation is similar to painting preparation. If you miss the lumps and bumps, they will show through on your final work. It is the same with laying turf.
- 7** If laying turf in the heat, do not water the area immediately before turf, this will only create unwanted sticky soil or even mud. If the soil is very "powdery" then a water 2 days before can help compact and consolidate the soil. You may need to touch the area up after this water though

**Now that your site and soil is properly prepared, some extra options are below. They aren't necessary but can help in the speedy establishment of the new lawn.**

#### Water Crystals

Lightly sprinkle water-saving crystals over the whole area to be turfed. They act like a sponge and absorb rain or hose water that the roots can draw out when needed.



### **Starter Fertiliser**

Add an even application of starter fertiliser over the whole area to be turfed. This will give the root structure the required nutrients to bind with the soil.

## **FAQ's about preparing your site**

### **At what ground level do I need to have my soil prior to installation, if the area is going to be irrigated?**

The soil needs to be levelled at 5-10mm below existing driveways and pathways, so your lawn will be level, or slightly above for mowing ease. Furthermore, the top of your pop-up sprinklers should be level with the soil so they pop up through your lawn but are low enough not to be hit by the mower.

### **How do I remove existing lawn?**

If the existing lawn is an old couch variety, or a Kikuyu lawn, spray the area with a glyphosate type chemical, such as Zero or Roundup. Leave the area for two weeks and repeat the application to ensure you have killed all the grass and weeds. Tip, if you really want to make sure you have had a good kill; turn over the soil and water the area well. Wait up to 2 weeks for germination and then spray a last time.

Ideally, remove the top 50-100mm of weed/grass mix and, depending on the soil going back in, you may need to replace it with clean, free-draining soil such as sandy loam. Tip; if you want to leave your old soil in place then make sure you have worked it up to 100mm to ensure a soft bed for the new roots (light organics can help or use gypsum – first aerate the lawn, then spread gypsum over the lawn and rake in. If you're unable to aerate the lawn first, water the gypsum in heavily). If you cannot find sandy loam, sand and loam can be purchased separately and applied at a ratio of 50/50. If you are lifting the levels, old soil can be left but it's recommended to free the old soil up with a garden fork or rotary hoe before covering.

9 times out of 10 you can expect small amounts of nutgrass in your subgrade soil. This is because once you disrupt this subgrade soil layer the water can penetrate a seed bank deeper down. At Tinamba Turf, and Clifton Park Turf we ensure that we spray for all weeds and pest before the turf leaves the gate.

Roughly re-level the area and install irrigation (or fix your existing system). Once you have done this, do a final re-level of the area.

Commission your irrigation system to make sure all the sprinklers are working properly and are at the right levels (be sure not to flood the area). The top of the sprinkler needs to be level or slightly below existing soil so the sprinkler can pop up through your lawn.

### **Do I need to get a soil test?**

Soil tests are important to the long term success of your lawn. Make sure that when planning to re-turf or install a new lawn that every effort goes into your soil preparation. A soil test will identify where your soil is deficient or over abundant in core nutrients to growing a healthy lawn. Doing the work early may save you a lot of money in the future.

### **Is Drainage and Contouring important?**

Prepare correctly now as it is impossible to rectify at a later stage. Most lawns do not perform well in a poorly drained situation so effective surface and subsurface drainage is a must (eg 0.6% or more fall is a good start). Smooth the lawn bed taking care to shape the surface contours so that your lawn will not develop areas which are waterlogged and soft, or hard and dry. The installation of a drainage system may be necessary. Remember waterlogged soils will cause problems especially in periods of prolonged wet weather.