

INSTALLATION

WHEN CAN I LAY TURF

Turf can be laid at any time during the year summer, winter, autumn or spring. Turf will take approximately two weeks to establish in summer and approximately four weeks in winter.

HOW MUCH TURF WILL I NEED?

Divide the lawn area up as much as possible into rectangles. Use ropes, stick lines or landscaper paint. Multiply length by breadth and add the areas together. Curves will need to be estimated. Telephone Tinamba Turf(1800 813 101) or Clifton Park Turf Supplies (1800 468 869) and we can discuss the procedure with you if you need assistance.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN DESIGNING MY TURF AREA?

Spend time in the design stage. Consider maintenance. Stepping stones or a pathway may be needed in heavy traffic areas. Remember not to make the lawn surface too steep or areas too small for the mower to negotiate. On sloping blocks, terracing may be needed. Consider installing an irrigation system which will save time and water and therefore money.

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 rapid and effective surface and subsurface drainage is a must. 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.

HOW DO I PREPARE MY GROUND?

Remove all building waste and other solid matter which may be close to the surface. If you have an existing lawn or if you have weeds and grass and wish to establish a lawn it is necessary to remove the lawn/grass/weeds.

Spray with glyphosate(commonly sold as Roundup).This herbicide leaves no residual in the soil. Remember that glyphosate needs to make contact with leaves to be effective and will travel from the leaves through the plant to the root system. Visible effects on some plants may take three to seven days, but the effect on other plants may not be visible for two to three weeks or even longer. The grass/weeds will wilt, yellow and eventually die.

When treating nutgrass, only the nuts attached to the sprouted leaves will be eradicated. When other nuts below the surface sprout, spray these leaves. Eradication of nutgrass can be a very time consuming task. Take care that no glyphosate spray drifts on to surrounding plants as these could be killed as well.

If a substantial mat of lawn needs to be poisoned, it may be necessary to hire a turf cutter or bobcat to remove the lawn mat. Spray with glyphosate, wait for the herbicide to take effect and then remove. Do not bury an old lawn because poor rooting and uneven settling could develop with the new lawn.

HOW DO I PREPARE THE SOIL?

Turf likes to establish a deep root system (150 mm or more) so lay turf on a freely draining soil free of lumps and stones to that depth. A deep root system allows the lawn to thrive - in hot, dry, and/or windy conditions the lawn roots can fossick for water well below the surface. This saves water and therefore money! Lawns with shallow root systems could develop a sparse mat which will allow weeds to infest, be more prone to diseases and need to be watered more often.

The pH level of the soil is very important - lawn thrives in a 6.0 to 6.5 pH range. If the level is too high or too low, the lawn may not be able to uptake some necessary nutrients and therefore will not perform to its optimum. Testing kits are available from most garden centres. Shady situations need extra attention and thought - soil type, turf type, depth of soil and drainage system. Soil will take longer to dry out because of less sunshine and, in many situations, less wind.

Heavily compacted soils require loosening up by cultivation to help aeration and root and water penetration.

Clay or shale is not a suitable soil for a lawn. Clay can be improved by incorporating gypsum at the rate of 150 grams per sq m. This will help break up the clay and enable lawn roots to penetrate deeper. Remember that the addition of gypsum will be needed regularly.

It may be necessary to hire a bobcat to excavate the existing soil and replace with transported soil. We cannot stress enough the importance of buying a good quality freely draining soil free of lumps and stones. Sandy loam is an ideal soil for a lawn. The addition of organic matter will help sandy loam retain moisture and add valuable nutrients to it. Commercial soil mixes are also available, but check the composition of them before purchasing to ensure that they are suitable to use under your lawn.

The depth of soil required depends on the existing soil/subsoil. If your base is impermeable,



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such as clay or shale, we suggest a depth of 100 to 150 mm. If your existing soil/subsoil is mediocre, then less than 150 mm of topsoil would be adequate. We do not advocate laying turf directly on ash or sand because watering (especially in hot/dry weather) is critical. Some moisture retentive quality to the soil is advisable. A guide - 10 mm coverage over 100 sq m requires 1 m³ of soil.

Once the soil is spread, it should be screeded, this will eliminate any bumps or hollows. The finished surface should be smooth. Drainage needs consideration. Screed to a level not less than 20 mm below surrounds such as driveways and mower strips as the turf has approximately 20 mm of soil on the rolls/slabs.

WHAT PREPARATION DO I NEED BEFORE TURF ARRIVAL?

Apply a fertiliser for quick lawn establishment. We suggest a low analysis fertiliser with an N:P:K of approximately 5:6:5 at the rate of 10 kg per 100 sq m. The fertiliser should contain a high 'P' component because this assists rapid root development. Just before laying the turf, incorporate the fertiliser into the top centimetre of the soil by raking. Lightly screed again. Apply water saving crystals to assist with water absorption. Have an adequate moisture content in the soil prior to laying the turf - this is particularly important when laying turf varieties with thick mats such as the soft leaf buffalo varieties. However, do not make the soil too wet as indentations will occur when laying the turf. Roll the soil to firm the surface so that as little disturbance as possible occurs to the surface during turf installation.

HOW DO I LAY TURF?

Schedule the turf arrival after preparatory work is completed. Lay turf as soon as possible after delivery especially during hot weather. We suggest that in summer, turf should be laid the day it is cut or the following morning. The turf will keep longer if shaded and kept cool by sprinkling. Turf can be covered with a material which breathes (e.g. hessian, canvas tarp). Internal heat rapidly causes turf damage.

Do not lay turf on hot soil. On hot days, sprinkle the soil regularly before laying turf as turf placed on dry, hot soil experiences a substantial delay in rooting or even permanent damage even though the turf and underlying soil are thoroughly watered following laying.

Lay turf across a slope. Where possible, start at the base of a slope. Butt the rolls in close together. Do not stretch the turf and do not leave gaps. Avoid overlays. Stagger the joins in each roll in a brick-like fashion. Use a sharp knife or spade to trim edges. Avoid leaving small strips at edges as this could dry out. It is wise to lay a section of turf, lightly water, roll and soak. Rolling will eliminate any air pockets and bed the turf into the soil to assist rapid establishment. Roll in both directions with a roller. Lay, lightly water, roll and soak the next section and so on.

If the prepared ground becomes excessively wet after turf has been purchased, use planks or boards to walk on to distribute body weight more evenly.

Water thoroughly. It is necessary to saturate, not just sprinkle, the newly laid turf. Check that the water has soaked the ground underneath the newly laid turf. During establishment, thoroughly water once per day - twice a day could be necessary on really hot or windy days. Pay particular attention to the edges as they can dry out quicker than other areas. The turf could easily die if watering is inadequate. Keep the turf moist until the turf begins to establish - approximately seven to ten days in summer and up to four weeks in winter. After this period of time, lift a corner of turf white roots will indicate that the turf is starting to establish. Taper off watering over a period of time.

If your lawn needs a mow during this period (this may be necessary in the hotter weather) allow the ground to dry out for a day. Mow and begin the watering program again.

Be conscious of lawn grubs. Check within a week of turf delivery and spray if necessary. Lawn grub season begins in late spring and can extend to late autumn. Some seasons are worse than others. Lawn grub infestation can seriously affect and even kill a newly laid lawn. We undertake a lawn grub maintenance programme during the lawn grub season on the farm.

Do not walk on your lawn during establishment. The underlying ground will be very soft and any weight could cause indentations which would require correction at a later time, or fracture the young establishing roots. We do not recommend top-dressing a newly laid lawn as it is one of the surest ways of introducing weeds into your lawn.



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