

MOWING

- Regular mowing of a lawn will make it look tidy and help guard against weed invasion
- Always use sharp mower blades, this will lesson disease
- Remove lawn clippings Dead decaying matter increases the incidence of fungal diseases.
- There are two types of mowers: Cylinder mowers give a fine finish to the lawn because the blades have a scissor-like action. Rotary mowers cut the grass leaves making the tips of the leaves a little jagged.
- Mow at the correct height for a healthier, greener lawn. Do not mow your lawn too short- a thick mat will guard against evaporation, making the lawn more drought tolerant. The ideal mowing height will vary according to the variety of lawn and according to the season.

SUGGESTED MOWING HEIGHTS

• Palmetto	30-40mm
• Empire Zoysia	25-30mm
• Wintergreen couch	15-25mm
• C1	15-25mm
• CT2/ Green couch	15-25mm
• Queensland Blue	25-30mm
• Aussiblu	25-30mm
• Sweet Smother	40-50mm

Please note: if Palmetto, Sweet Smother, or Empire Zoysia are grown in heavy shade, mow at a higher height than stated above. The leaves will need as much leaf area as possible for photosynthesis.

WATERING

- It is best to apply water only when the lawn really needs it. Let the lawn dry out thoroughly between water applications
- Stress will occur if a lawn receives insufficient water. The leaves begin to wilt, curl up and the colour becomes dull. Water immediately.
- Water deeply. Deep watering encourages lawn roots to grow deeper into the soil to obtain a greater supply of nutrients and water, making the lawn stronger and less venerable to drought, meaning you will not need to water as frequently. The soil acts as a natural insulation to the roots, the deeper the roots the better they can withstand hot weather, less heat less stress to the lawn.
- Water slowly with sprinklers or soaker hoses. Automatic sprinkling systems are ideal; especially rain sensitive systems.
- Water in the early morning or late afternoon, less evaporation will occur.
- Two waterings per week in the hottest of weather is usually suitable for most lawn types. One watering per fortnight in the cooler months is usually sufficient. However, take into account rainfall.
- Pay particular attention to lawns in shady situations because of less sunlight and frequently less wind ,consider also that the surrounding trees take moisture from the soil.
- Constantly wet soil could encourage fungal disease infection and will also starve the lawn roots of oxygen causing the lawn to become thin and unhealthy. Sweet smother does not perform well in poorly drained situations.
- Be aware of Lawn dryout. This is where water drains away without being absorbed into the soil. Apply a wetting agent to improve water penetration into the soil and increase water retention. Aeration and scarifying will also increase water penetration.

FERTILISING

- Apply fertilisers at the recommended rates. Well nourished lawns will flourish and will be strong and healthy to inhibit weeds and to fight off diseases.
- Too much fertiliser can be harmful and could even kill the lawn.
- The soil should be watered thoroughly immediately after the application.
- There are several types of fertilisers, organic, inorganic, slow release, we recommend a complete fertiliser twice per year. Once in early march to make your lawn healthy for the winter months and again in early Spetember to feed the lawn when it comes out of winter. Fertilise at other times of the year (usually 4-6 weeks) to maintain a thick and healthy lawn. Your local nursery or hardware should help you with your choice.
- Winter fertilising application rate should be half of the recommended application rate.
- Hand spreaders are ideal for evenly distributing fertiliser.



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WEED, PESTS AND FUNGAL DISEASES

- Use non-chemical control as much as possible. Think about:
- Rid your prepared site of all weeds before laying turf and buy weed free turf
- Correct mowing height, sharp blades, deep watering, manual weed removal, fertilising when necessary, and healthy soil are all important.
- Nip any weed invasion in the bud by hand removal of weeds. Check the lawn for five minutes before mow and if a weed is found, dig it out of moist soil with a hand digger. Never let a weed go to seed, as that one weed could become hundreds of weeds in a short period of time.
- Do not apply chemicals unless it is necessary as most are poisonous. Preventative sprayings will kill the beneficial 'good guys' as well as the predators.
- We do not advocate the use of sprays which are suitable for more than one purpose - apply the spray which is really needed.
- Make sure family, neighbours and animals are aware of any chemical application. Keep off sprayed lawns until weed or pest has absorbed the spray and the residue washed off.
- If the chemical is needed, use with caution. Read the label before applying. Mix the correct amount of pesticide in the correct amount of water and apply over the prescribed area. If insufficient chemical is applied, weeds will probably grow better than ever and pests will not be eradicated. If too much weedicide is applied, the lawn could be harmed or even killed and the environment will suffer.

WEEDS

- Healthy weed-free turf, if correctly watered, fertilised, mown and renovated should never suffer from any significant weed problem.
- If a major weed problem develops, a herbicide may need to be applied. It is extremely important to use the correct spray for the particular lawn type. The correct herbicide to be used will depend on:
- The lawn variety and (never apply herbicides containing 'dicamba' on soft-leaf buffalo turf types varieties- Palmetto is such a variety. Herbicides that can be applied to Queensland Blue Couch can be applied to Aussiblu and Sweet Smother)
- The weed to be eradicated
- Spray when the weather is calm as chemical drift could harm nearby plants.
- The soil should be moist before applying herbicides. It is wise to add a wetting agent to the herbicide to help the herbicide stick to the leaf of the weed making it work more effectively.
- Kill weeds in their seedling stage as they are easier to eradicate, and before they have set seed.
- Spray during the cooler part of the day.
- Do not mow the lawn for about a week before spraying and do not mow for at least three days after spraying.
- Persistent weeds may need repeat sprayings but these applications should never be applied closer than two weeks from the previous spraying.

INSECT PESTS

- The most common pest is the lawn grub. Freshly laid turf can be badly damaged. No turf farm can guarantee the supply of a lawn grub-free, a turf farm would need to spray each and every night to give such a guarantee. **THIS WOULD BE EXTREMELY HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT.** We spray when necessary, usually every 7 to 10 days during the lawn grub season.
- Summer and autumn are the worst months especially if hot and humid. A rapidly thinning lawn which starts to brown usually indicates a lawn grub problem, this is often noticed after the lawn is mown. The presence of hovering orange/red wasps (predator of the grub) or grey moths (stage of the lawn grub cycle) also indicates a lawn grub problem.
- Check the control when necessary. Within days, this pest can reduce beautiful lush lawn to stalks, so if evident, treat immediately.
- To check if you have lawn grub, place a wet carpet piece/dense rag on some lush lawn overnight.
- Early the next morning, lift the carpet/rag. If there are substantial grubs still having their meal, spray immediately in the late afternoon/dusk- do not delay. Sprays do not kill the egg stage of the grub cycle so we recommend a repeat spraying one week later to ensure subsequent hatchings are controlled, break the cycle. Checks, and sprayings (if necessary) at monthly intervals should maintain control over the pest.
- Insecticides can be applied immediately after a lawn has been laid without any ill effect.
- Another pest is the African Black Beetle and its larvae, the curl grub. Both feed on the



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MAINTENANCE

lawns roots. The lawn begins turning brown and dying in an uneven pattern. The dead lawn will lift from the ground like a piece of carpet. Treat immediately because severe damage can be caused.

- Occasionally, poor draining, clay type soils and long periods of wet weather cause insects living in the soil to form holes in the lawn so that they can breathe. Mounds of soil balls appear on the lawn. Earthworms, crickets or ants, which are 'drowning' below usually cause this. No treatment is needed.

FUNGAL DISEASES

- Most fungal diseases disappear when the lawn begins to grow rapidly after the winter months. Think environmentally – don't spray unless necessary.
- Lawns suffer from fungal disease especially if the soil is not well drained or if wet weather prevails for several weeks/months.
- The accumulation of thatch will compound the problem.
- Mowers, feet and wind will assist the spread of fungal diseases.
- Dollar spot is one of the most likely diseases to be encountered in Queensland Blue Couch. Only minimal incidence of Dollar Spot has been noticed in Aussibblue. Cobwebs appear, and then yellow blotches, which turn brown and finally bleach to a straw colour. The individual spots (twenty cent piece size) may sometimes join to form large irregular patches.
- Palmetto can be prone to the fungal disease, Grey Leaf Spot. Strawy coloured patches appear on the leaves.

RENOVATION

- Renovations of lawns will allow nutrients, air and water to penetrate to the root system, dramatically improving root growth resulting in a healthy and vigorous lawn which is less prone to disease and pest attack. Dethatching, Scarifying and Vertical Mowing
- As lawns grow they tend to build up an unhealthy thick mat of dead leaves and roots between the soil and the green lawn leaves. This is known as 'thatch'. Some lawns tend to thatch up more than others. A lawn with thatch of 15mm or more thickness needs attention. Dethatch from November to February when the nights, as well as the days are hot.
- Fertilise the lawn two weeks prior to dethatching.
- The soil should be moist. Engage a professional lawn renovator or set a rotary mower on its lowest level for green couch and shave the lawn leaves off. Leave a mat of 10mm when dethatching Queensland Blue Couch and Aussieblue and a 30mm mat (more in heavy shade) when dethatching Sweet Smother and Palmetto. Rake up the dead matter and remove.

CORE AERATION

- Core aeration is a commonly used renovation practice where cones or plugs of soil are removed from the lawn. Holes created vary in diameter and depth.
- Engage a lawn renovator- a garden fork can give a limited result.

TOP DRESSING

- Top dressing is only necessary to correct a problem, that being uneven levels, modify soil conditions, encourage new growth following disease in your lawn etc.
- It is best to top dress when the lawn is growing vigorously enough to quickly push through the soil layer (November to February)
- Fertilise the lawn two weeks prior to top dressing. Mow the lawn, water well, spread the top dressing (washed river sand) evenly and level out by raking or using a long board. Do not apply the top dressing too thick, no more than 10mm layer at a time. If top dressing Queensland Blue Couch or Aussieblue, make sure the tips of the leaves are not covered because these turfs can be very easily smothered. We do not recommend top dressing Sweet Smother or Palmetto.
- Newly laid turf should not be top dressed until it has rooted down and the ground has stabilised.



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