



SOD CARE SHEET

FIRST DAY WATERING

The sod should be watered well as soon as it is laid. Check by walking on it. If you make deep footprints, it has enough water. If the soil is firm, lift a corner of the sod to inspect. The soil on the back of the sod should be damp to wet. If it is not damp, water for at least thirty minutes.

SECOND THROUGH FIFTH DAY WATERING

Check your lawn at least one time per day, or more than once if it is hot or windy. Walk on the new lawn to inspect it. If the soil is soft and you make deep footprints, or water has puddles in areas, it is too wet and you should stop watering for a while, and water less often with less water. If the soil is firm, lift a corner of the sod in several places. The soil should be damp, not dripping wet or dusty dry. Areas where the grass has wilted or turned straw color have not received enough water, which caused the leaves to die. The roots and crowns are still alive and in most instances, new leaves will appear in seven to ten days. Cracks that appear between the rolls indicates not enough water has been applied and you should water longer or more often. Temperatures above 80 degrees Fahrenheit generally mean more water is needed and below 60 degrees Fahrenheit means less water is needed. In the cooler months of March, April, October, and November, sod needs much less water.

FURTHER WATERING

After five days or so, the soil has soaked up water like a sponge, and you must reduce your watering habits or you will drown the new roots. Roots will not grow into waterlogged soils. Begin stretching out the time between watering. Reset your timer if you have an automatic system. Begin the transition to water as indicated under the "Long Term Care" section of this document.

MOWING

Mow your new turf as soon as it grows enough to need it as the heights suggested under the "Long Term Care" section of this document. Sod will grow new roots best when it is mowed regularly and at the proper height. Arrange it so you do not water just before mowing so the mower won't sink into soft soil.

HOW SOON CAN THE SOD BE USED?

The sod is ready to be used instantly. The only concern is how soft the underlying soil is. Making deep footprints when the soil is soft won't hurt the sod, but will make for an uneven lawn. If children play and turn a corner up, just pat it back down.

WEED KILLERS

Your sod doesn't need any. Should a dandelion be present, just pull it out.

FERTILIZATION

The lawn does not need fertilizer for two weeks. Use this time to decide if you are going to fertilize the lawn yourself or hire a service to do so.



SOD CARE SHEET

LONG TERM CARE

WATERING THE CORRECT WAY

The correct way to water a mature lawn is simple, thoroughly but infrequently. When the soil is dry to a depth of five inches, water long enough to rewet the soil five inches deep. You need to learn two things to water sod properly:

1. How to tell when the soil is dry five inches deep. In a dry period, dig in the soil with a garden trowel to see how deep the soil moisture is. Moist soil is softer and darker in color. Soil dries from the top down. Grass will turn a bluish color in the heat of the day as the soil dries.
2. How long do you have to run each zone to rewet the soil five inches deep? You have to experiment. When dry, run a zone for 60 minutes, and dig in the soil 12 to 24 hours later to see how far down the water went. Do this for each zone. If you wet the soil deeper, or shallower, repeat the test for a different amount of time. Remember these points for each test. No two zones are the same. Each zone will dry out and take water at different rates, and each zone applies water at different rates. You can water your lawn any time of day, but morning is a good time because of typically less windy conditions. Avoid watering in the later afternoon or evening.

WHY YOU CAN'T SET AND FORGET A TIMER?

How often you need to water depends on how fast the soil dries out. The factors that influence how fast a soil dries out. The factors that influence how fast a soil dries out, temperatures, wind, amount of sunshine, and cloud cover. Soils dry faster on warm, sunny, windy days, than cool, cloudy, and calm days. Can a sprinkler system that is set to run every few days for a few minutes take any of those factors into account? Of course not! People who set and forget a sprinkler system usually over water, which causes serious problems like disease and nasty weeds. A lawn is more forgiving if you under water than over water it. Besides, a mature lawn will not die if you under water it.

TROUBLE SHOOTING WATERING PROBLEMS

Even though you have a sprinkler system, sometimes you might notice a part of your lawn that looks drier from the rest, especially during a dry period. It could be a complete zone, or just part of one. The first thing to check is how much water your system is actually applying. Use some straight sided cans, like a tuna fish can, and put them in a zone that looks good and one that looks dry. Run your system as usual and measure the amount of water in the different cans. If you find a difference in the levels, you can identify and correct sprinkler system problems.

MOWING

From May through September, mow at a height of 2.5 inches to 3 inches. From September through November, gradually lower the height to a final height of two inches. Mowing high like this results in fewer weed problems and a healthier turf.

MOWING

Clippings do not contribute to thatch production. Clippings should not be collected unless they are long and smother the grass. Leaving the clippings recycles the nutrients back onto the lawn, saving in fertilizer costs.



SOD CARE SHEET

LONG TERM CARE

FERTILIZATION

It is important to fertilize by a program, whether you hire the work done or do it yourself. Contact Thompson Landscape Company for additional details of our various fertilizer programs.

CRABGRASS AND GRUB CONTROLS

Unfortunately, advertising has made the threats from these pests seem larger than they really are. Large sums of money are wasted and pesticides are unnecessarily added to the environment. Briefly, crabgrass is only a problem in spots where the turf is thin. You can approach control two ways. Spot treat thin spots that have had crabgrass in the past in the spring before it comes up, or have a lawn service spot treat the weeds after they come up. A lawn seldom needs to be totally treated. All lawns have some grubs, but it takes more than five per square foot to cause damage. To save yourself some money, and protect the environment, become informed.

AERIFYING LAWNS

The purpose of aerifying is to loosen up a compacted soil. Compaction comes from two sources. New lawns can be compacted during construction and may benefit if aerified the first two years. Vehicle traffic, intense wear from dogs or under a swing set can also compact soils. Studies show that core aerification is the method that provides the most benefits, and one or two passes does not accomplish much.