



# Charlie's

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## SOD INSTALLATION

### Steps to Your Beautiful Lawn

The following are basic steps to installing and maintaining a beautiful lawn.

#### Step 1: Measuring and Ordering

Measure length times width for square footage. Our Rolls cover 10sqft. They are 2' x 5' each.

Schedule your turf delivery after preparation work is completed and you are ready to install. Prompt installation on the day of delivery will ensure a healthy beginning for your new lawn.

#### Step 2: Soil Preparation

For best results, roto-till or spade the area to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Eliminate drainage problems by having soil slope away from foundations. Rake in fertilizer and lime as needed to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. Rake and smooth the soil, removing rocks, roots, and large clods. Level the area based on your specific site requirements. Keep the grade 1 inch below sidewalks or driveways.

#### Step 3: Turf Installation

Install your lawn immediately upon delivery. Turf is a living plant that requires ground contact and water to survive, so begin watering the lawn immediately upon installation.

During extreme heat conditions, if turf cannot be laid on the same day of delivery, certain precautions should be taken. If possible, place turf in shade and moisten. All full pallets should be reduced by 50%. **Caution: Never cover pallets with plastic or vinyl tarps.**

Begin installing your turf along the longest straight line, such as a driveway or sidewalk. Butt and push edges and ends against each other tightly without stretching, avoiding gaps and overlaps. Stagger joints in each row in a brick-like fashion, using a sharp knife to trim corners. Avoid leaving small strips at outer edges, as they will not retain moisture. On slopes, place the turf pieces across the slope.

To avoid causing indentations or air pockets avoid repeated walking and kneeling on the turf while it is being installed or just after watering.

## Step 4: Watering

Give your new lawn plenty of water upon installation. Water daily, at least an inch of water in each zone, keeping the turf and ground beneath saturated until the sod is firmly rooted. If unsure about how much water your lawn is receiving, put a coffee can or other container in the area and measure manually while irrigating. After 2 weeks, a less frequent and deeper watering routine can begin.

Weather conditions and soil drainage will dictate the amount and frequency of watering. Be certain that your new lawn has enough moisture to survive hot, dry, or windy periods. Water areas near buildings more often where reflected heat can dry the turf.

### WHEN To Water New Turfgrass Sod

Begin watering new turfgrass sod within a half hour after it is laid on the soil. Apply at least 2 to 3 cm. (1 inch) of water so that the soil beneath the turf is very wet. Ideally, the soil 7 to 10 cm. (3 to 4 inches) below the surface should be moist.

**Watering Tip #1:** pull a corner of the turf back and push a screwdriver or other sharp tool into the soil. It should push in easily and have moisture along the first 7 to 10 cm. (3 or 4 inches), or you need to apply more water.

**Watering Tip #2:** make absolutely certain that water is getting to all areas of your new lawn, regardless of the type of sprinkling system you use. Corners and edges are easily missed by many sprinklers and are particularly vulnerable to drying out faster than the center portion of your lawn. Also, areas near buildings dry-out faster because of reflected heat and may require more water.

**Watering Tip #3:** runoff may occur on some soils and sloped areas before the soil is adequately moist. To conserve water and ensure adequate soak-in, turn off the water when runoff begins, wait 30-minutes to an hour and restart the watering on the same area, repeating this start and stop process, until proper soil moisture is achieved.

For the next two weeks keep the below-turf soil surface moist with daily (or more frequent) watering. Especially hot, dry or windy periods will necessitate increased watering amounts and frequency.

**Watering Tip #4:** as the turf starts to knit its new roots into the soil, it will be difficult, impossible and/or harmful to pull back a corner to check beneath the turf (Watering Tip #1), but you can still use a sharp tool to check moisture depth by pushing it through the turf and into the soil.

**Watering Tip #5:** water as early in the morning as possible to take advantage of the daily start of the grass' normal growing cycle, usually lower wind speeds and considerably less loss of water because of high temperature evaporation.

**Watering Tip #6:** if the temperature approaches 37(C (100(F), or high winds are constant for more than half of the day, reduce the temperature of the turf surface by lightly sprinkling (syringe) the area. This sprinkling does not replace the need for longer, deeper watering, which will become even more critical to continue during adverse weather conditions.

During the rest of the growing season most lawns will grow very well with a maximum total of one inch of water a week, coming either from rain or applied water. This amount of water, properly applied, is all that is required for the health of the grass, providing it is applied evenly and saturates the underlying soil to a depth of 10 to 15 cm (4 to 6 inches).

**Watering Tip #7:** Infrequent and deep watering is preferred to frequent and shallow watering because the roots will only grow as deeply as its most frequently available water supply. Deeply rooted grass has a larger "soil-water bank" to draw moisture from and this will help the grass survive drought and hot weather that rapidly dries out the upper soil layer.

## **HOW To Water New Turfgrass Sod**

Proper watering techniques are a critical aspect of lawn watering, equal in importance to the issues of when to water and how much to water. Here are several key factors to proper technique:

Avoid hand sprinkling because it cannot provide the necessary uniformity, as most people do not have the patience, time or "eye" to adequately measure what is being applied across any larger areas of lawn. The only possible exception to this guideline would be the need to syringe the surface of the grass to cool it, or to provide additional water near buildings or other heat-reflecting surfaces.

In-Ground Systems require professional design and installation and they require routine adjustments and regular maintenance to be most effective and efficient. The greatest mistake made with most in-ground systems is the "set it and forget it" philosophy that fails to account for the changing seasonal water requirements to maximize turf growth or even allowing the system to operate during or following a multi-inch rain storm. Another frequent problem is when heads get out of alignment and apply water to the sidewalk, street or house siding, rather than to the lawn.

Hose-End Sprinklers range in complexity, cost and durability, but are highly portable and can provide uniform and consistent coverage, when properly placed on the yard and adequately maintained.

Watering difficult areas such as slopes and under trees requires some special attention to achieve maximum benefit and a beautiful lawn.

### **For Slopes, see Watering Tip #3**

For Areas Under and Near Trees you need to know the water requirements for the specific trees, as well as for the grass. Despite having deep "anchor" roots, trees take up moisture and nutrients from the top six inches of soil...the same area as the grass. Trees and turf will compete for water. Watering sufficiently for the grass may over-water some varieties of trees and under-water others. A common solution is to not plant grass under the drip-line of trees, but rather use that area for perennial ground covers, flowerbeds or mulch beds.

## **HOW MUCH Water Is Applied & Needed**

The amount of water your lawn requires and receives will determine its overall health, beauty and ability to withstand use and drought. Keep in mind that too much water can ruin a lawn just as fast as too little.

One inch a week is the standard water requirement established for most lawns; however, this will vary between different turf species and even among cultivars within a species. There will also be varying water requirements for seasonal changes and still more differences brought about because of different soil types.

Look at your lawn to determine its water needs. Grass in need of water will have a grey-blue cast to it, rather than a blue-green or green color. Also, footprints will still appear after a half-hour or more on a lawn in need of water, while on a well-watered lawn, footprints will completely disappear within minutes.

Use a soil probe, such as a screwdriver or large spike to determine how dry your lawn is. If the probe can be pushed into the soil easily, it's probably still moist, but if it takes a lot of pressure to push in, it's time to water.

Water timers can help provide consistency and even be programmed or set to turn-off when no one is awake or at home. Some timers measure just the amount of time water is flowing through the device and you have to know or calculate how long to set the timer for (see item above). Other units measure the number of gallons of water flowing through it. Knowing that 600 gallons per 1,000 square feet equals one-inch of water will help you calculate the timer settings your lawn will require.

## **Maintenance**

Your new sod lawn significantly increases your property value. With proper care your lawn will remain a great asset, providing beauty, a clean playing surface, and an improved environment.

During the first three weeks, avoid heavy traffic on your new lawn. Give the roots an opportunity to firmly knit with the soil before using it regularly. Avoid leaving large indents or footprints.

Mow often, generally removing no more than 1/3 of the grass height at a mowing. Keep your mower blade sharp.

## **HOT WEATHER / FULL SUN**

### **IMPORTANT**

**INSTALL SOD IMMEDIATELY AND BEGIN WATERING!**

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL NEXT DAY – SOD WILL NOT LAST ROLLED UP INTO NEXT DAY!**

Sod is perishable and must not be allowed to remain on the pallet. Proper watering is essential to the establishment of your new sod. After the first pallet of sod is laid, begin watering before laying out next pallet. **Do not wait until all of the sod is laid out before watering.** During the first week, keep sod and soil completely soaked - it is almost impossible to over water during this period. For the first 7- 10 days, the sod should be so wet that you cannot walk on it without sinking in. As a general guide, during **hot season** water three times a day for 15-20 minutes during this critical week. Second week, reduce watering time to one time day, gradually allowing the soil to firm. Third week reduce watering to once every third day. If water starts to puddle, cut back a bit on watering time. This will make it possible for you to mow for the first time toward the end of week three. After three weeks your sod should be established and you may cut back to a normal watering routine for your location, continued over saturation is harmful and can cause root rot and ultimate surface damage, one inch every 7 to 10 days. Frequency and length of watering will depend on how warm, how windy, and how rapidly the lawn dries out following each watering. Remember the goal during week one is to keep the sod and the soil beneath moist all of the time.

## **COOL WEATHER**

### **IMPORTANT**

**Install The Sod Immediately And WATER THOROUGHLY!**

Sod is perishable and must not be allowed to remain on the pallet. Proper watering is essential to the establishment of your new sod. During the first week, keep sod and soil completely soaked - it is almost impossible to over water during this period. For the first 7- 10 days, the sod should be so wet that you cannot walk on it without sinking in. As a general guide, during **cool season** water once a every other day for the first two weeks. During the third week reduce watering to once every third day. Watering times should be approximately 10-15 minutes. If water starts to puddle, cut back a bit on watering time. This will make it possible for you to mow for the first time toward the end of week three. After three weeks your sod should be established and you may cut back to a normal watering routine for your location, continued over saturation is harmful and can cause root rot and ultimate surface damage, one inch every 7 to 10 days. Frequency and length of watering will depend on how warm, how windy, and how rapidly the lawn dries out following each watering. Remember the goal during week one is to keep the sod and the soil beneath moist all of the time.

### **Helpful Hints On Installation**

Apply a pre-plant fertilizer to the ground before laying the sod.(Starter Fertilizer), a complete fertilizer contains the three important grass food elements, nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium (potash).

Make sure that your sprinkler system gives you head-to-head coverage so water application is uniform. This is critical as almost all sod failures are due to improper coverage of the irrigation system.

Butt edges and ends to fit tightly against each other. This prevents drying out of the seams.

Stagger strips as though laying bricks.

- Where needed, trim sod with a sharp knife - a serrated steak knife works great.

### **After Laying The Sod**

- We cannot stress the proper watering program too much.
- Stay off your new sod as much as possible for at least 14 days.
- Mow after three weeks with your mower set at the highest cutting height to reduce scalping. Remove all piles and heavy accumulation of grass clippings. Never mow off more than 1/3 the height of the grass. Make sure your mower has a sharp blade. The following advice may be helpful: Mow the lawn before the clippings are longer than one inch. In the spring and fall, mowing may have to be done twice a week due to rapid growth. Mowing heights should be 2 to 2 1/2 inches in spring and fall and 2 1/2 to 3 inches during the summer months.
- Fertilize your lawn in spring and fall
- Control your pets. Urine spots and "foot printing" on soft, soggy sod may cause permanent problems.

### **Troubleshooting Hints**

Bluish grey areas appearing in the lawn - These are spots which have wilted because they are not getting as much water as adjacent areas. Soak with a garden hose until you can adjust your sprinkler system for better coverage (adding a head, etc).

Sod not rooting - Within 14 days your sod should have many roots emerging, if not, check your watering. NOTE: Sod in shade will root very slowly, if at all. Most turf grass sods require 4 to 5 hours of full sun or an entire day of filtered light to successfully root and become established. Sodding in shady areas is not recommended.

Brown Spots - These can be caused by pets, dry spots, areas that are not rooting or possibly fungus. About 95% of the time, when you see a brown spot it is due to lack of water. Check by pushing a screw driver into the ground where the sod is green and then into the brown spot. If it is harder to push into the brown spot, you know it is simply dry.

Mushrooms - Do not worry about these. When you cut back on watering they will go away