

# Caring For Your Landscape: Sod Care

A professional sod installation is the sure-fire way to get lush, consistent ground cover quickly and easily. New sod, however, is perishable and needs to be carefully maintained until its root system has had a chance to become established in your lawn. Follow these guidelines to get the greatest value from your sod installation.

## Watering

Proper watering of sod is essential for root establishment. The ideal time for watering is in the early morning. Avoid watering sod in the afternoon when temperatures are at their peak. It's important to note areas where sod is adjacent to concrete sidewalks or asphalt. Heat radiates from these hard surfaces, so you'll need to give neighboring sod some extra watering by hand.

The day of your installation, enough water should be applied to penetrate through the sod and down two inches into the native soil. For the first 10 days after sod installation, keep the soil surface constantly moist but not soaking by watering 20 to 25 minutes each day. You can pull back the corner of the sod to make sure that water is reaching the soil below the surface. If you notice the edges of the rolled sod pulling apart or separating, it's a sign that you're not watering enough. After 10 days, water every other day for about 30 minutes. After 3 weeks, reduce watering to 3 to 4 days a week, and use a rain gauge to ensure you're applying an inch of water each week.

## Fertilizing

The best time to fertilize is four to six weeks after installation. This will give your new sod the opportunity to become well established, and will encourage further development of a healthy root system. We recommend an application of Turf Trust Lawn Fertilizer using a rotary spreader at a rate of no more than 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. Wait at least four weeks before your next application. Whatever you do, avoid using herbicides when the weather is hot and dry, and in the first few months after your sod application.

## Mowing

Avoid the urge to mow until you've seen 3 inches of new growth. You can expect this be two or three weeks after installation. Be sure to reduce the frequency of watering in the days before your first mowing to give the soil a chance to dry out and firm up a bit. If the lawn is too wet to cut, skip a day of watering and then do your mowing. When you do mow, don't set your blade too close to the ground. Take off no more than 1/3 of the height of your grass in a single mow to prevent undue stress on the plants.

## Activity

To minimize stress on your new grass, it's best to stay off new sod until after the first mowing. You can step on the sod for the purpose of checking soil penetration or moving sprinklers, but it's best to avoid any unnecessary foot traffic. It's essential to keep pets off of the grass for the first two weeks or so, as "doing their business" could cause damage to your investment. After two weeks, every member of the family can go back to using the yard as usual.

**By following these tips and taking good care following your sod installation, you'll give your new grass the opportunity to take root and flourish.**

## Sod Care

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Proper care will help your sod take root and grow to its full potential.

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