

Turfgrass Installation Guide

*Soil Preparation
Site Preparation
Turfgrass Installation*

Prepare the Soil

“Enhance a lawn’s ultimate beauty and success by improving the soil before the installation takes place.”

Why is Good Soil Important?

For optimum growth, turfgrass needs just four things (in the proper balance) ... sunlight, air, water and nutrients. Reduce any of these, or provide too much of any one and the turfgrass will suffer or die. In the right proportions, turfgrass will flourish, providing beauty to the landscape, a clean and safe place to play, plus many other benefits.

Grass obtains three of the four essential factors (air, water and nutrients) from the soil, but many soils are less than ideal for growing grass. Some soils contain too much clay and may be compacted. While compacted soils may be great for roads they are bad for grass. If air and water are not available to the roots it will inhibit the growth of the grass. Other soils may have too much sand. While Sand may be beautiful on a beach, too much sand in the soil will prevent water and nutrients from staying in the root zone long enough for the plant to use them. Another frequently observed problem with many soils is the pH. The pH scale measures how acidic or basic a substance is. If the degree of acidity or alkalinity in the soil is too high or too low it can affect the availability of nutrients to the plant and prevent optimum growth.

What is the Best Soil for Turfgrass?

Loams, sandy loams and loamy sands, with a pH of 6.0 to 7.0 are the very best soils for producing a beautiful, high-use, low maintenance lawn. Unfortunately, this ideal soil mixture is seldom found on any property after construction.

How Deep Should The Soil Be?

The absolute minimum depth of quality top soil for a care-free lawn is 4 inches (10 cm); however, for deeper root penetration and the benefits that they bring, the accepted standard is 6 inches (15 cm).

Can Soil be improved?

Not only can most soils be improved, they usually need to be improved to get maximum results with only minimum effort.

The knowledge of what is necessary, the amount, and availability of materials, immediate costs and time are all factors that typically deter people from taking steps to improve soil.

Proper soil improvement and site preparation before any planting takes place will make it easier for the grass roots to penetrate deeply and evenly. Deep roots will make the lawn more drought resistant, use water and nutrients more efficiently and result in a denser and

healthier lawn as new grass plant shoots emerge. A dense lawn crowds out weeds and offers greater resistance to insects and disease.

“The beauty is in the blades, but the ‘action’ is in the roots”

Prepare the Site

Step-By-Step Site Preparation

Follow these simple steps for a beautiful, healthy and trouble-free lawn:

1. **Clear the site** of all building materials (wood, cement, bricks, etc.) as well as any buried rocks, stones or other debris that are any larger than 2 inches (4 – 5 cm) in diameter.
2. **Rough grade** the entire area to eliminate any drainage problems on the property. This would include sloping the grade away from building foundations, eliminating or reducing severe slopes and filling low-lying areas. A tractor mounted blade and/or box are most often used for rough grading, but if the area is small, it can be done with hand tools. The rough grading, will probably uncover more debris that should be removed.
3. **Initial tilling** to a depth of at least 2 inches (5cm), should be completed prior to adding any topsoil or soil amendments. This will control most annual weeds, alleviate subsoil compaction, permit a bonding of the topsoil to the subsoil and improve root penetration as well as air exchange and water movement.
4. **Add topsoil** to achieve a total topsoil depth of 4-6 inches (10 – 15 cm), after firming. The topsoil should be loamy sand, sandy loam, clay loam. Loam, silt loam, sandy clay loam or other soil suitable for the area.
5. **Test soil for Ph nutrients** to determine if any pH correcting materials or nutrients are required.

Acidic Soils, A pH of less than 6 can be improved with the addition of lime. The type (or source) and amount applied will be determined by the level of acidity and should be based on the recommendations of a professional.

Alkaline Soils, A pH of 8 and higher can be improved with sulphur. As with acidic soil correcting materials, the type and the amount of materials needed will be determined by the level of alkalinity and should be based on a professional recommendation.

6. **Apply Fertilizer** to correct any deficiencies following the product’s recommended rate. To avoid root injury to new turfgrass, the fertilizer should be raked into the top 3-4 inches (3-4 cm).
7. **Finish grade** the entire site, maintaining the rough grading contours and slopes, with a tractor-mounted box blade for large areas or a heavy-duty rake for smaller sites.
8. **Roll the area** with a lawn roller one-third full of water to firm and settle the surface. Low spots should be filled to match the surrounding grade surface. If time permits, allow area to settle further with rainfall or by applying irrigation.

TURFGRASS INSTALLATION

Cultivated turfgrass allows you to enjoy a lawn of instant beauty and maturity without the usual time-consuming hassles of seeding.

When purchasing turfgrass, consult a member of Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) in your area to be assured that you are getting the finest quality turfgrass available. A listing of turfgrass producers in your area is available by visiting: www.turfgrassod.com

Step-By-Step Turfgrass Installation

1. SOIL & SITE PREPARATION

Refer to soil and site preparation

2. MEASURING & ORDERING

With a tape, measure the area of your planned lawn area, with the length, width, and any usual features. Your local TPI member will be happy to assist you in determining the amount of turfgrass sod you will need based on your sketch.

Schedule your turfgrass delivery after you have completed your soil and site prep and are ready to install the turfgrass. Prompt installation on the day of delivery is crucial.

3. TURFGRASS INSTALLATION

Prior to installing your turfgrass sod moisten the soil and install your lawn immediately upon delivery.

In hot weather, protect unlaidd turf by placing stacks or rolls in the shade. If possible, cover with a moist cloth, or lightly water the unprotected turf.

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

To prevent indentations or air pockets avoid repeated walking or kneeling on the turf while being installed or just after watering.

After installing the turfgrass, roll the entire area to improve turfgrass/soil contact and remove air pockets.

4. WATERING

Give your new lawn at least 1-inch (2-3 cm) of water within a half hour of installation. Water daily or more often, keeping turf moist until it is firmly rooted (about 2 weeks). Then less frequent and deeper water should begin.

Weather conditions 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 dries turfgrass.

CAUTION

During the first few weeks, avoid heavy or concentrated use of your new lawn. This gives the roots the opportunity to grow into the soil and ensures the turf will remain smooth.

** Source from TPI - Turfgrass Producers International*