

GREENBELT TURF FARM

THE FIRST 30 DAYS

We have gone to great lengths to provide the best sod available in good health. The care you give your new lawn in the first 30 days will determine the success of your new lawn. During the first thirty days your lawn will require light frequent irrigation until the roots extend deep enough into your soil to retrieve deeper water reserves at which time irrigations should become deeper and less frequent. During this first 30 days the greatest threat to your lawn's health is significant drying out in between irrigations. Following is a step by step program to help promote a healthy lawn.

The First 30 Days

Day 1

Water your new sod immediately after installation. This first watering must be immediate and should be very deep. This irrigation should equal about 1" (this can be measured with a rain gauge or a small cup) Water two more times this day to ensure that the entire soil profile is thoroughly wet.

Day 2-10

Water your new lawn frequently (2-3 times per day). Lift a section of sod periodically to check for soil moisture. Fertilize the new lawn with a balanced fertilizer i.e. 20-20-10 at a rate of 5 pounds per 1000 square feet. Mow the grass as soon as it has grown enough to require mowing. Do not let the grass get too tall before the first mowing. Mowing grass before it has rooted will not hurt the grass. Waiting until the grass has grown tall and removing a lot of the leaf growth can damage or even kill your lawn.

Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf growth with any single mowing.

Day 11-20

Cautiously begin to reduce watering frequency and increase watering depth (1-2 times per day). Continue to lift a section of sod to check soil moisture during the day especially when an irrigation schedule is changed.

Day 21-30

Continue to reduce watering frequency while increasing watering depth. Watering should now be 1 time a day. Continue to check soil moisture regularly. Sod should be rooting into the ground and should be more difficult to lift from the soil. Watch the turf closely for signs of drought especially during heat or wind and particularly following a change in the irrigation schedule. Signs of drought are generally seen in subtle and sometimes not so subtle color changes.

GRASS SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Dark blue/silverish color: This change develops in the early stages of wilt and can be reversible with very little consequence if water is applied immediately. **Silver or grey color:** This progression of wilt is the plant begging for water and is a more serious level of wilt that, while reversible will turn brownish straw colored before new green growth begins. Water immediately and increase the watering schedule.

Brown or straw color: This is the color of dormancy. When the grass turns this color, in most cases it is still alive and will green up when sufficient water is added to the lawn. This green up period will take between one and three weeks. Avoid this stage with new sod because newly laid sod may die under sustained dormancy.

Shrinkage: Newly laid sod strips can actually shrink in size if they dry out after they're laid! If you notice gaps the lawn probably didn't get the water it needed. This is most likely in the first week. Try to avoid letting this happen but if it does make sure to correct the water deficiency and you can sprinkle some soil between the gaps to fill them in. Shrinkage will probably go hand-in-hand with silver or straw coloring as well, so it will take a couple weeks of consistent watering to see the grass recover.

The watering recommendations listed above are meant to be flexible based on the soil type and the time of year that the sod is installed. Excessive heat or wind as well as a sandy soil may require more water than sod laid on a well prepared soil during the spring or fall. Always pay close attention to the signs that the grass is giving you and let those signs supersede the directions above.

After Establishment

Fertilization:

Fertilize your grass 3-5 times per growing season with a balanced fertilizer. Never miss the fall fertilization. During drought or lower water use applications reduce fertilizations during the spring and summer.

Mowing:

Mow regularly never removing more than 1/3 of the leaf growth with any mowing. Mow at a height of between 3" and 4". Maintain a sharp blade on the lawn mower. Do not mow when the grass is either too dry or too wet.

