

SOD CARE

Written by Cityscape Landscape



GENERAL INFO

New sod care varies greatly based on the time of the year it is laid, the outside temperature, the amount of direct sunlight the area receives, rainfall and soil. During periods of high heat rolled sod starts to break down in as little as 24 hours. Once laid and exposed to high heat, direct sunlight and wind sod can perish in as little as 12 hours.

During cool wet conditions sod can be very resilient. We have installed several hundred thousand square feet of sod around and after the Thanksgiving Holidays that required minimal initial care and watering.

The point to stress is that new sod care will vary greatly by external conditions present at installation. Below are general tips that will have to be adapted to your lawn and the external conditions present following installation.

WATERING

Water your new lawn daily until after the 2nd mowing. Water in the morning and or early afternoon. Water to the point of run off or saturation. FYI watering during the middle of the day may cause more water loss due to evaporation but it will not burn your sod. Mid day watering is required during high temp conditions to help offset normal evaporation. Avoid watering your lawn at night if possible.

Make sure you visually check your grass for signs of wilt. One way to gauge your watering is to walk across the lawn. If the blades of grass do not stand back up and your foot prints remain evident you need to water more. Another warning sign that you need to water is if you start to see seams in your lawn. Seams result from the roll of sod actually shrinking as it dries out. If this occurs consider it a warning and increase your watering immediately.

If you have water running off your lawn it is saturated. If the soil below your lawn will not support lightweight traffic reduce the length of watering however keep the frequency of watering up. New sod has shallow roots that require frequent, lighter watering to avoid desiccation. Established deeply rooted turf requires less frequent, longer periods of watering. As your lawn matures and roots you will change watering from periods of frequent light watering to less frequent deep watering.

MOWING

Mow your new lawn 5 to 7 days after it was installed by Cityscape Landscape. Set your mower at the highest setting and mow the grass high. Also reduce watering the day your mow to avoid making ruts or footprints in the lawn. The secret to mowing right is to mow high and mow often. Do not remove more than 1/3 of the grass leaf blade at a time. Letting the lawn grow high and then mowing it short will permanently damage your lawn.

If the grass gets long due to infrequent mowing then mow it as high as possible,

remove clippings, wait 2 to 3 days and mow it high again. Repeat this until the grass gets down to the desired length of 2 1/2" to 3".

Note: For the end of the landscape season it is advisable to reduce the length of your lawn slightly. I advise this cautiously. Do not scalp your lawn in November. Simply reduce your mower deck height one setting for the final mowing. Remember to raise the wheels back to their normal setting after the final fall cutting.

Mulching mowers are great when combined with frequent mowing. During peak grass growing cycles in the spring you will need to mow your lawn twice weekly to keep clippings from piling up on the lawn. A mower that allows you to collect clippings during these peak periods and mulch clippings at other times is the best bet.

FERTILIZING

Fertilize your new lawn with a general lawn fertilizer from a local home center. There will be three numbers on the package of fertilizer representing the amount of 'N' nitrogen, 'P' phosphorus, and 'K' potassium within that package. For your new lawn we recommend you find a fertilizer where the 3 numbers are very close to each other such as a 10-10-10.

Most fertilizers come in packages designed for suburban yards. The package of fertilizer you buy may cover between 5,000 and 10,000 sq/ft or possibly more. You live in Chicago and your lawn may not be that big. Make sure to read the package and apply the right amount of fertilizer. Don't spread the whole package on your lawn at once or you could seriously damage or kill it. For a typical city lot a bag of fertilizer should last for multiple applications. Fertilize your lawn 3 to 4 times a year avoiding periods of high heat or drought