



Homeowner's Guide for SOD Install

Step 1: Prepare Your Site

1. Prepare your area by removing existing grass, weeds, rocks, debris, etc. The grade should look as you want it to after installation paying attention to drainage and evenness.
2. Soil compacted by construction equipment needs to be loosened, leveled and firmed.
3. Remember, the best time to prepare for sod is before it arrives.
4. Finally, it is critical to apply a Starter fertilizer immediately before installation. Apply the fertilizer, then install the sod.
5. For sod install you will need some kind of knife to cut it, and sprinklers and hoses.

Step 2: Measure

1. Measure the area the same way you would for painting a wall or installing a floor. Most sod farms sell their sod by the square foot. Square footage is just length in feet multiplied by width in feet. After finding the square feet of each section, add all the totals together to get a grand total amount of square feet for your yard.
2. Take your time measuring. Having a little extra is better than running short.

Step 3: Order

1. If it's a pick-up order, keep in mind that most sod farms require at least one day's notice.
2. If it's a delivery or installation order, they may require 1 to 3 weeks notice, so plan ahead.

Step 4: Receive

1. On the day you are to receive your sod, please be ready! We are diligent about getting you the freshest product in the best possible condition and it is equally important for you to be ready.
2. If sod sits on a pallet for too long, sod farms cannot guarantee its success. Lay it as soon as it arrives.

Step 5: Install

1. Before actually laying the sod, remember to apply a Starter fertilizer. Next to water, the Starter Fertilizer drastically increases the sod's ability to begin root growth and general establishment.
2. In extreme heat conditions, dampen the soil to cool and eliminate root stinging. Apply just enough water to cool the soil without making mud.
3. Avoid walking on installed sod as much as possible.
4. Begin with a straight line (sidewalk, a wall, driveway, etc.) and lay sod alongside.
5. With the next row, stagger the joints, like a brick wall, and make sure the end and long edges are snugly pushed together. Gaps will allow weed to germinate and grow.
6. As soon as there is enough finished area, begin watering.
7. Once all sod is installed continue watering until the soil under the sod is completely soaked. Lift a piece of sod here and there and check for effective infiltration of water. If the ground is soggy and soft when you step on it you have watered enough. At this point try not to reenter the area until the ground has absorbed the water.
8. Do not have heavy traffic (kids or pets) on your new lawn for the first 4 weeks (mowing is OK).

Monitor and Care of Newly Installed Sod

Watering

Watering practice for your new sod will depend on the time of year. Maintain moist to wet soil under sod for the first month (i.e. It takes at least six gallons of water per 10 square foot roll to produce 1" inch of water for that roll. This amount is what you'll need for the water to seep through to the bottom of the roll and make the ground damp/wet. This is especially imperative at time of install). When you pull back sod look for new, white roots going into the ground. You may even feel some resistance as you pull the roots free. This is a positive sign of good watering. **Your best indicator for your sod's water needs is wilt or lack of wilt. Wilted sod will have a dry, dusty, greyish/green appearance. This can appear the day of installation until fully rooted if not getting enough water. Properly watered sod will always look full, lush, and green.**

1. Keeping the soil moist continuously usually means water light and frequent 2-3 times a day for the first 4 weeks.
2. Water early in the morning and late afternoon/early evening. Never water in the middle of the day or late evening.
3. Make sure your new lawn (the first month) has enough water to survive hot, dry, windy days.
4. Do not 'drown' your lawn. If you do, you will have a lawn with a shallow root system that is susceptible to grubs and heat/drought stress.
5. Check the edges/perimeter areas and make sure they are getting enough water (i.e. curbs, driveways, sidewalks). We cannot stress this enough! These areas are the first to struggle due to lack of water.
6. If you do not have an irrigation system, we urge you to use an impact or pulse sprinkler. They look like this:



They do the best when it comes to coverage. The 'Banana' or 'Rainbow' sprinklers do not perform well for newly installed lawns, as they do not give the output that is needed.

7. To make sure all areas get watered properly, you may have to move your sprinkler(s) around your yard several times to get every inch.

Mowing

1. Mow as soon as it is tall enough to mow. After that you can mow at 2 to 3 inches high.
2. Do not mow if ground is saturated and doing so will leave tracks or footprints.
3. Make sure mower has sharp blades.
4. Don't mow off more than 1/3 of the total height of the grass.
5. Leave grass clippings on the lawn as they will add fertilizer to the turf and enrich your soil.

Fertilizer

1. Use Starter fertilizer at time of installation – preferably before the sod is installed, but you can apply afterwards if necessary. This will last 6 weeks.
2. Apply the Starter fertilizer again after the first 6 weeks have passed since the new sod was installed.
3. You will have Starter fertilizer on your new lawn for the first 12 weeks. After that, depending where you fall on the calendar year, follow the Maintenance Fertilizer Program. Call your RTF Sod supplier for more information