

Handy Hints for DIY Landscapers

Lawn Preparation

Great lawns perform both as a functional open space or play area within your property whilst providing an aesthetic form in the foreground or background of a garden. The key factor responsible for long term lawn care is adequate drainage. This must ensure that appropriate soil moisture is held to support growth and retain nutrients, without excess moisture remaining that will encourage root diseases.



When laying a new lawn it is important that the base layer supports these objectives. Turf is laid on a 25-75mm layer of Turf Underlay™ which is a free draining medium, with some organic matter added to hold sufficient water to support turf growth. The turf underlay should be levelled with a lawn leveller or the back of a rake.

Where sub-soils are clay based, and drainage is limited, either the levels must be set to ensure excess moisture drains away, using a fall in the order of 20-30mm across every lineal metre of lawn, or a drainage grid must be installed to ensure no pooling of water will occur. Where light clay soils exist, the addition of gypsum at the rate of 1kg per square metre will help gradually to break the clay and improve drainage.

Laying Turf

Each roll of turf is 200mm wide, 2 metres in length and covers 1 square metre. Lay the first roll of turf, making sure it is flush with the edge of the garden.



Turf should be laid across a slope to avoid erosion and joints should be staggered (like brick work). Use hedge shears or a spade to cut the turf to shape. It is important that the turf is laid tight so that no gaps exist. Gaps will leave edges of the turf exposed to drying out.

Once you have laid the turf, roll it with a lawn roller or stamp it down with the flat of the rake to ensure the roots are in contact with the soil. Water the turf well until it is established (check with your council on water restrictions and possible exemptions for new lawns). This will require daily watering over the first week. Try to minimize traffic on the new turf for a week or two to allow the roots to establish.

Lawn After-care

Do not mow your lawn for one or two weeks after being laid. The turf needs time to take root and bind to the turf underlay. The first mow should be on a high setting and then gradually lower the cutting height over the coming month.



Where the preparation has been sound, there should be no need to top dress the lawn for at least 12 months. However, where you have had to apply a significant depth of underlay to level the site, it is common for a degree of uneven settling to occur. This will result in hollows or uneven areas.

Top dressing should be applied to re-level lawns. **Nitrotop**® is an organic top dressing with added wetting agent, and provides additional organic matter to the lawn which releases organic nutrients over the following 6 months.

It is important that **Nitrotop**® is applied to a maximum depth of 10mm. Too great a depth of topdressing can effectively smother the lawn and cause die-back, so you may need to raise the levels with successive applications over time.

It is important that lawns are well watered following the application of topdressing as the product is nutrient rich and may lead to shoot burning if not watered in.

Handy Hints for Water Management

- Consider sub-surface drip irrigation
- Choose water-efficient lawns such as soft leaf buffalo varieties.
- Maximize water efficiency by deep watering less often rather than regular shallow watering. This will encourage deeper roots and help build drought tolerance.
- Water early in the morning, before the sun is too high. Aerate the lawn occasionally with a garden fork to help the water soak in thoroughly.
- Don't cut your lawn too low as this exposes the soft tissue to sunlight, increases evaporation from the soil and places unnecessary stress on the lawn. This is particularly important during late spring throughout the summer months.