

How to Establish Your Lawn

Determining how to establish a beautiful lawn can present several questions, numerous answers and produce a variety of results. The information in this brochure is intended to assist you in obtaining and achieving the quality lawn you desire.

There are basically two options for establishing a lawn depending on your regional location vegetative or seeded.

VEGETATIVE

Vegetative stock includes one of three options; **Turfgrass Sod** which is available in both warm and cool season turfgrasses, and **Plugs**, or **Sprigs** and **Stolons**, most often associated with warm-season turfgrasses.

Turfgrass Sod is a process through which rolls or slabs of turfgrass are placed on prepared soil and capable of rooting within one to two weeks creating an “instant” lawn.

Plugs are small cylindrical or block shaped pieces of grass extracted from a field of turf or cut from strips of turfgrass sod.

Sprigs and Stolons are individual plants or sections of plants containing several nodes from which new plants may grow.

SEEDED

Seeding and/or **Hydroseeding** is a process in which you apply selected turfgrass seed to a prepared soil, allowing it to grow in place to maturity. Most cool-season turfgrasses and select varieties of warm season grasses can be established by seed.



TURFGRASS SOD



PLUGS



SPRIGS & STOLONS



SEEDED



HYDROSEEDING

Establishing a Lawn

Vegetative
Turfgrass Sod
Plugs
Sprigs and Stolons

Seeded
Seeding
Hydroseeding



Making The Right Decision

A properly established and maintained lawn is not only a life-time investment, adding to the value of your property, it also offers a wide variety of environmental, community and economic benefits including:

- *Soil Erosion Control*
- *Storm Water Runoff Reduction*
- *Ground Water Recharge*
- *Heat Dissipation*
- *Noise Abatement*
- *Disease Prevention*
- *Organic Pollutant Decomposition*
- *Soil Restoration*
- *Reduced Pest and Allergy-Related Problems*
- *Dust Suppression/Capture*
- *Glare Reduction*
- *Air Pollution Control*
- *Oxygen Production*
- *Carbon Retention & Storage*
- *Cooling Effect*
- *Fire Barrier*
- *Wild Life Habitat*
- *Crime Control*
- *Physical and Mental Health*
- *Recreation & Social Harmony*
- *Human Productivity*
- *Community Pride*
- *Improved Property Value*

Making the wrong decisions when trying to establish your lawn will cost you time, energy, money and natural resources.

Making the right decisions when establishing your lawn will give you a beautiful, usable and enjoyable investment.

What Option For Establishing A Lawn Best Serves Your Needs?

Considerations	Seed	Hydroseeding	Sprigs, Stolons and Plugs	Turfgrass Sod
Best Time To Install	Depends on geographic location. Best in Fall for most areas, possibly Spring or late Summer but not recommended in Winter.		Depending on geographic location warm season turf-grasses should be planted in late Spring to early Summer.	Turfgrass sod can be installed any time of the year if it is available.
Soil Preparation	Same for all types of lawn installation: Deeply till soil, add necessary amendments and fertilizers, grade and level for smooth surface, remove all debris, lightly pack and moisten.			
Water Requirements	Highest water needs. (Bare soil dries quickly.)	Moderate to high water needs. (Mulch will retain some moisture.)	Watering is crucial. Water immediately after planting and closely monitor each day. Once established (with-in two weeks) watering can be done less frequently.	Lowest water requirements. Water at time of installation to a depth of 6-inches, then light watering for next 2 to 3 weeks. Turfgrass will cover soil and prevent drying.
	Water lightly for 3 to 4 weeks. Keep surface moist; apply 1-inch of water per week after the first mowing.			
Seed Quality	Extremely variable because of germination rates, weed and foreign matter content; unknown or unspecified varieties. Generally lower quality seed than used in turfgrass sod production.		Buy fresh plugs and sprigs. Keep vegetative stock moist to prevent it from drying out.	Typically highest available sod quality, certified, elite seed. Seed may be certified to insure specific variety. Mixtures and blends used to best suit area needs.
Weed Control	Multiple applications of pesticides usually required to combat competitive weed growth until turf is established.		Spacing between plants increases invasion of weeds.	Minimal if any pesticide control.
Uniformity of Coverage	Seeding varieties, rates, germination times, wash-out (erosion), traffic, feeding birds and rodents can result in spottiness.		Sprigs and plugs are usually planted 6 to 12 inches apart and result in spottiness until plants fill-in.	99 to 100% uniformity with use of mature turfgrass sod.
	Mulch layer may minimize these issues.			
Runoff/Erosion	Heavy rains or sloping areas will cause seed, chemicals and soil to wash onto sidewalks and into sewer systems.		Heavy rains and overwatering can result in runoff. Monitor to keep plants moist. Be careful not to overwater.	Capable of accepting heavy rains without runoff or erosion.
	Little if any protection for several months.	Mulch should reduce runoff/erosion.		
Visual Impact	Rough texture and open soil.	Colored mulches act to camouflage appearance of bare soil.	Visible gaps until plants begin to establish and fill-in.	Immediate beauty of a "complete" and mature lawn.
Useability	Low traffic for 2 to 4 months after seeding with faster germinating seed. Normal use only after the first year.		Depending on grass variety, may accept low traffic within two to four months but may take as long as three years to fully establish and fill-in.	Low traffic/use immediately. Normal and high traffic levels within two to three weeks.
Installation Cost	Lowest initial cost	Low to mid level cost	Plugs are more expensive than seeds/sprigs. Sprigging is the least expensive and fastest method of establishing a warm-season grass.	High initial cost.
Cost vs. Value	Higher management and maintenance costs, compounded by increased water and pesticide applications. Delay of use, poor uniformity and unappealing look are trade-offs for lower installation costs.		Soil preparation, time, post planting care and keeping plants moist is critical until established. Labor intensive.	Installation costs offset by time, useability, uniformity and visual appeal. Reduced maintenance, pesticide and water costs.