

# Newly Laid Turf Care

## Quick Care Tips

1. As soon as your new lawn has been laid be sure to water it well. You should water the turf for a considerable amount of time, this first watering is one of the most important ones. The water should soak through to the ground below. This is particularly relevant during drier periods.
2. Water your new turf daily after it has first been laid – for a minimum of the first two weeks. If the weather is warm when your new turf is laid, be sure to water it either early in the morning, or later on in the evening, this prevents water evaporating in the heat of the sun. You may need to water your turf daily for up to a month if you've laid your new lawn during a warm summer. If the temperature is under 10c, like it is in the autumn, watering daily may not be necessary. It should be moist all the time for about a month after it has been laid, after this point you can reduce the amount of watering.
3. Do not walk on your new turf until its roots have bedded into the soil. This can take a number of weeks. If your new turf has been laid on a slope, it can take longer to root in, so stay off it a little longer – perhaps six weeks or so to be safe.
4. Wait a few weeks before mowing your new turf, and when you do mow it, be sure to set your mower to one its highest cutting settings. When mowing in the autumn and early spring, you tend to use one of the highest cutting settings on your mower anyway.
5. Do not get fooled by Mother Nature. Wet leaves and heavy dew makes the turf look wet and your wellies may glisten, but your turf roots may be dry.

## Remember

To properly water turf you must supply all of the roots with water. Wetting leaves does very little to support the growth of turf.

## **Sharpen the blades**

Have the blades of your mower sharpened at least once a year. Blunt mower blades are very damaging to your lawn because they rip the grass instead of cutting it. This results in blades of grass that turn white at the tips and become more prone to lawn diseases.

## **Watering**

Most lawns need regular rain to replace the moisture that grass draws from the soil. Grass can survive a couple of weeks without rain, but after this period you will notice symptoms of stress. Grass may turn silvery blue and turf will look flat as the grass wilts and loses its natural springy nature.

To avoid these problems, here's what to do...

### **Prick the surface**

If the lawn is baked hard then water will tend to run off the surface rather than soak into the soil. To prevent this from happening prick the surface all over with a garden fork.

### **Water thoroughly**

During a drought water the lawn thoroughly once a week rather than giving light sprinklings every day. Water at a cool time of the day, either late at night or early morning.

### **Adding nutrients while watering**

Liquid and soluble lawn care products that feed, weed or kill moss can be added to your watering can and applied at the same time as you water your lawn. As they are diluted with water, lawn foods get to work quickly.

# Basic Lawn Care

Lawns are one of the most intensive and time consuming areas of maintenance in a garden, but the rewards of a well kept lawn are great. In the summer months healthy grass grows vigorously and will need cutting at least once a week, and care must be taken not to cut the length too short. Following the simple rules below can help bring out the best in your lawn and help keep work to a minimum.

## Cut regularly

Cut the grass as often as you are able to. Mowing encourages thicker growth, the development of fine grasses, eliminates coarse grasses, and deters flowering and seeding of weeds. The chart below is a good indication of the schedule of grass cutting you should adhere to under normal seasonal conditions.

Month	Recommended Mowing Frequency
March	Every 2 weeks
April	Every 10 days
May to August	At least once a week
September to October	Every 10 days
November to December	Top off if weather is mild

## Adjust the height

Never give the lawn a close shave. It should be long enough to remain healthy but short enough to be visually pleasing. **Do not mow more than a third of the height of the grass in one cut.**

## Trim the edges

Trimming around the lawn gives a sharp edge that is very pleasing to the eye. You can buy a half moon edging iron that should only be used once or twice a year. At other times use long-handled edging shears to maintain a neat appearance every time you mow.

## **How to take care of your turf throughout the year**

### **January**

Aerate surface using solid tine spiking machine or garden fork, weather permitting. Keep surface free from leaves, twigs and debris, reducing risk of disease.

### **February**

Cut straggly grass with carefully set mower. Brush ground regularly if dry to remove debris.

### **March**

At sign of growth, roll surface with a light to medium weight, brush surface to remove debris. Mow grass, start reducing mowing height. Always use a grass box. A two-directional 50/50 mowing is best at first, make sure the mower is set correctly, to achieve a clean cut. Two days after first mowing apply lawn fertilizer designed for spring/summer applications (high nitrogen, medium-rate potash and iron – avoid phosphates in mixture), If no rain within three days of application, water fertilizer into top soil.

### **April**

Apply fertilizer mid-month. Apply weed killer to brood-leaved weeds – apply in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. Apply moss killer if needed. Sulphate of iron is useful – controls moss, invigorates desirable grasses and deepens green colour of overall appearance. Gradually reduce mowing height. Step up mowing frequency to twice weekly. Always remove clippings.

### **May**

Scarify area by machine or spring tine rake to remove dead grass lying in base of sward or "thatch", If a large quantity of material is removed at first pass, scarify every two-to-three weeks during the growing season, until only a small amount of debris is removed. If grass is sparse in areas, over-sow with fine grass mixture by hand or machine, at the rate of approximately three-quarters to one ounce per square yard. Apply bulk top-dressing of three parts sand to two parts peat to one part of good top soil, sieved and brushed into surface of sward, effectively covering the seed. Continue mowing two-to-three times a week and aim to be at optimum mowing height. Domestic lawns – total growth of 25mm to 37mm, finer turf areas – mow down to between 9mm and 12mm. Continue routine rolling, apply fertilizer if required.

### **June**

Signs of a drought – water lawn area avoiding excessive watering. Further treatment of weed killer will be necessary if weeds are present, continue to mow two-to-three times a week, continue routine scarifying, rolling, and debris clearing.

### **July & August**

Continue to mow alternate direction periodically. Water during drought conditions. Lightly spike if ground compacted. Apply final summer fertilizer towards end of August. Enjoy surfaces as much as possible.

### **September**

Decrease frequency of mowing. Raise cut height gradually to between 6mm and 12mm above the summer height. Hollow tine spike if ground consolidated, follow with top-dressings of sand or and/loam.

Apply bulk top-dressings consisting of sand, peat and good quality topsoil, brushed into the sward to give approximately 3mm coverage. Add mixture of quality grass seed with

top-dressing to increase grass in worn areas. Lightly roll if absolutely necessary. Stop scarifying area (only if undertaken on a regular basis throughout spring/summer, if not, scarify very lightly). Apply autumn fertilizer dressing (less nitrogen than summer dressings, high proportion of potash, little iron).

### **October**

Regular mowing gradually comes to an end but when weather conditions demand, mow area as frequently as needed by length of growth. Keep the area free from debris and leaves "Rest" area in readiness for winter months. Apply a solution of iron sulphate to enhance appearance of grass and "harden-off" grass for the winter.

### **November**

During frost-free and dry periods mow area when necessary – blades set at highest level. Last opportunity to apply missed autumn/winter fertilizer dressings or worm control applications.

### **December**

Keep area brushed and raked free from debris. Keep off turf during wet and frosty weather.