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Watering New Sod

The first watering of newly installed turfgrass sod is the most important. Begin watering immediately after installation of new turfgrass. The first watering establishes how well the grass will perform for years to come.

WHEN TO WATER NEW TURFGRASS SOD

ON THE DAY OF SOD INSTALLATION: It is essential to begin watering new turf within a half hour after it is laid on the soil. Apply at least 1 inch of water so that the soil beneath the turf is very wet. Ideally, the soil 3 to 4 inches below the surface will be moist. In dry or windy conditions, move your sprinklers often so that no area goes too long without water. Once you get through the first day, you can catch up on deeper watering in the evening and early morning.

FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS (or until the turf is well-rooted): Keep the below-turf soil surface moist with daily (or more frequent) waterings of approximately 1/4 inch each. Especially hot, dry, or windy periods will necessitate increased watering amounts and frequency. Learn to recognize signs of dry turf. When turf begins to dry, the leaves will curl and have a needle-like appearance. Dry spots will have a purple or grey color. If this occurs, water immediately.

Watering Tip #1: Pull back a corner of the turf and push a screwdriver or other sharp tool into the soil. It should push in easily and have moisture along the first 3-4 inches, or you need to apply more water.

Watering Tip #2: Make absolutely certain that water is getting to all areas of your new lawn, regardless of the type of sprinkler system you use. Corners and edges are easily missed by many sprinklers and are particularly vulnerable to drying out faster than the center portion of your new lawn. Also, areas near buildings dry out faster because of reflected heat.

Watering Tip #3: Runoff may occur on some soils and sloped areas before the soil is adequately moist. To conserve water and insure adequate soak-in, turn off the water when runoff begins, wait 30 minutes to an hour and restart the watering on the same area, repeating as needed.

Watering Tip #4: As the turf starts to knit its new roots into the soil, it will be difficult, impossible, and/or harmful to pull back a corner to check beneath the turf, but you can still use a sharp tool to check moisture by pushing it through the turf and into the soil.

Watering Tip #5: Water as early in the morning as possible to take advantage of the daily start of the grass's normal growing cycle, lower wind speeds, and less loss of water by evaporation.

Once your new sod is adequately rooted, gradually shift to watering practices for established lawns. (see brochure)