



# Installation Guide

---

## **Killing Your Existing Lawn**

Prior to the installation of sod, any existing lawn should be chemically killed and removed. Make sure that the existing lawn is well watered and growing vigorously. Apply an herbicide such as Roundup, or a similar product, to the entire lawn. Read and follow all label instructions. A second application about two weeks after the first will catch those areas missed and generally insure a complete kill of turf and weeds. Should the existing lawn contain bermuda grass, kikuyu grass, or other warm season grasses, chemical control will only be attained from April through mid-October. (Be aware that Roundup does not control the seed of common bermuda grass, kikuyu grass, or any other weed seed.)

## **Removing Your Existing Lawn**

When the turf is dry, brown and dead, you can remove the lawn. Rent a sod cutter and cut the lawn into small sections. Just cut short, thin strips! They are easier to move, and you only need to cut out the dead sod, not a thick layer of soil. A sod cutter is about the size of a lawnmower, so you might want to arrange for help loading and unloading this piece of equipment from your vehicle. If you already have a sprinkler system, use flags to mark the sprinkler heads so you don't hit them!

## **Soil Preparation**

Rototill the soil and add amendments. First, remove all rocks and debris, and then rototill the soil to a depth of four to six inches. This will help eliminate drainage problems and prepare the soil. Spread a layer of soil amendments onto the area. Rototill the amendments into the soil until thoroughly mixed into the soil.

A good soil foundation is the key to the success of your new lawn. Soil types can range from sand to clay, so be sure to get the recommended soil amendments for your area. Call us if you aren't sure what to use.

**What are Soil Amendments?** Soil amendments are composted organic mulch and recycled wood fibers you add to the soil to prepare the dirt for your planting needs or strengthen nutrient-poor soils. For example, sandy soils need to be enhanced with organic mulch to nourish the sandy soil. Amending clay soils with organic mulch helps break up heavy clay. Soil amendments can also be added to your entire yard to raise the level of the ground a few inches. Central Coast Sod carries TOPPER, a product by KELLOGG. We carry them in two cubic square feet bags. Two bags of TOPPER is recommended for every 100 square feet!

## **Install your sprinkler system**

A sprinkler system is a great tool for the survival of your lawn. A good landscaper or irrigation business can help you get started.

## **Grading and Rolling**

Clear the surface where the sod will go of all debris, including rocks and root segments that rototilling may have turned up. Rake to level the area, making sure that the soil level is about 1" below the level of sidewalks, patios and driveways and tops of sprinkler heads. The soil surface must be level to have a level grass surface! Check once again for low spots and settling. If you have installed sprinkler lines, install the sprinkler heads after the final grading is done. Remember to compensate for the thickness of the sod and recommended mowing heights of your sod variety.

## **Laying Your Sod**

To lay your sod, start from the back of your property line to front along the longest straight-line boundary. Work away from the line so you're not stepping on the fresh sod. Butt edges and ends to fit tightly together. Stagger sod slabs (like laying bricks) to offset seams. Should your area be irregular in shape, run a string between stakes in a straight line through the area and begin laying sod along this line. Make sure each piece of sod has good contact with the soil, because air pockets prevent proper rooting. If laying sod on a steep slope, use wooden pegs or sod staples to temporarily keep the sod in place.

Trim edges with your knife to fit around curves and leave clean, trimmed edges around sprinkler heads, driveways, etc. Avoid cutting sod into short or narrow strips because smaller pieces tend to dry out and fail to root properly.

## **Keep Sod Moist**

After you have laid about 200 square feet of sod, mist it with a garden hose before you finish the whole job to prevent the new sod from drying out. Hot summer temperatures can wilt fresh sod, so it's important to keep it moist as you lay it down! After the sod is laid, you can use a roller to ensure good contact between the sod and the soil. Do not use the lawn until rooting has started and the lawn is growing vigorously. Water your sod as much as necessary to keep it squishy wet for 10 days. The sod needs this water to re-establish itself with new root growth. Avoid watering at night. After 10 days of frequent watering, you can return to your normal schedule. Be sure to allow the soil to firm up to give you an opportunity to mow your lawn. A new sod lawn should be mowed two weeks after installation.