

Turf Care Guide



Preparing the soil

- Spray and **remove weeds** and old grasses approx. 14 days before ground preparation.
- Remove hard/compacted ground and **excavate** soil to 150-200mm below paths, etc.
- Ensure the area has adequate **drainage**. This is essential for successful growth.
- Apply **Gypsum** at approximately 1kg per square metre for clay soils.
- Apply **sand/soil mix** at approx. 50-100mm; Fertiliser can also be lightly raked in.
- The ideal soil **pH** for turf is 5.5 to 6.5 (pH kits are available from garden centres). A good pH balance will encourage earthworms, which are great for soil health.

Laying the turf

- The best time to lay turf is **August – November**.
- Turf rolls are approximately 1m². (Approx. 2.2m long and 45cm wide).
- For best results, turf should be **laid immediately** upon delivery.
- Lay turf in a brick pattern, pushing ends together and avoiding gaps or overlapping.
- **Water turf** within 30 mins of laying. Continue watering daily until it is firmly rooted.
- Turf is established when it cannot be lifted by hand. Watering can then be reduced to one or two times per week, depending on the weather conditions.
- **Mowing** can occur when turf has established (usually within 2-4 weeks of laying).

Maintenance

- **Watering** should occur 1 or 2 times per week.
- **Mow often** (depending on turf variety) and remove no more than 1/3 of the grass height per mowing. Ensure mower blades remain sharp.
- See our '**Turf**' page for further recommendations.
- When lawns are appropriately maintained, they are heartier, resist more weeds and maintain their lush, green colour.

Choosing a fertiliser

- **Remember NPK:** Nitrogen (N) - for green, growing leaves; Phosphorous (P) - for deep, strong roots; Potassium (K) - for drought and disease resistance.
- A balanced fertiliser is approximately **N11:P4:K8**.

Although Parklea Sand & Soil endeavour to provide quality advice, please note that this information is meant as a guide only. Conditions and results may vary depending on individual circumstances.

- Different fertilisers are beneficial during **different seasons**. E.g. Nitrogen in Spring, to encourage growth and Potassium in Autumn to toughen grass for winter.
- **Organic lawn foods** (e.g. Dino Fert Pellets, Organic Advance Plus). These include natural products (e.g. manures, rock minerals) to provide slow, prolonged feeding.
- **Synthetic granular fertilisers** (e.g. No.17 lawn food). These are chemical fertilisers which include major and trace elements for fast greening.
- **Slow release lawn foods** (e.g. Yaramilla) These release nutrients slowly.
- **Liquid hose-on fertilisers** (e.g. Yates Buffalo Pro, Lawn Rescue by Lawn Solutions). Although these don't offer long term nutrition, they are great for fast greening.
- Do not constantly use fertilisers high in nitrogen, as this will increase soil acidity and ruin the natural pH balance.
- See us in store for further information.

Applying a fertiliser

- Apply a suitable fertiliser every 6-8 weeks to maintain a healthy, green lawn. (Spring is the best time to top-dress the lawn).
- For compacted soils, aerate the ground to allow for good fertiliser and water penetration.
- Remove weeds before fertilising, as you do not want to feed them too.
- Fertilisers with a herbicide will kill hard to remove weeds without harming the grass. Ensure that the fertiliser you buy is suitable for your lawn type, as some will kill buffalo lawns. Remember that you are using chemicals and always read the labels.
- Bare patches of earth can be covered with sand or lawn dressing to fill in the holes.
- Do not over fertilise your lawn, as this will burn the grass. Apply lightly to the turf horizontally and then vertically.
- Fertiliser spreaders can be purchased from Parklea Sand and Soil. These ensure the most even spreading of fertilisers. Alternatively, improvise with an old plastic pot with drainage holes and use it as a shaker.
- Read the instructions regarding watering before or after fertilisation. If using a bulk Organic Topdressing, turf should remain moist for the first 1 – 2 weeks, especially when the weather is hot and dry.

Thatch

- Thatch is a layer of dead grass which lies above the soil and root system. It can stop air and moisture reaching the roots and encourages fungal disease.

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- If your lawn feels spongy under foot, then chances are a build-up of thatch is underneath. This is particularly common with buffalo, couch and kikuyu varieties.
- De-thatchers or scarifiers can be hired from equipment hire stores. These cut through and remove unwanted materials, although they are not recommended on buffalo lawns.
- A metal-tined rake can be used in smaller areas to remove excess thatch.
- Avoid over fertilisation and over-watering turf as this can encourage thatch build up.
- When soils become compacted (e.g. from walking over them, driving over them, etc), water does not soak through and air does not circulate. A corer or garden fork can be used to work the lawn and provide aeration. Holes can be filled with a sandy soil; this is best in spring.

pH

- Check the pH of your lawn every year or two. Ideally, the pH should be a slightly acidic 5.5-6.5. It is best to test before fertilisation, as nutrients will not be utilised by the soil if the pH is not appropriate.
- For acidic lawns (below 5.5) lime or dolomite will assist; for alkaline (over 7), sulphate of ammonia will make the soil more acidic.