

PLANNING & LAYING A NEW LAWN



BURY HILL
LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES



WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR TO LAY TURF?

As long as the soil is not frozen, waterlogged or extremely dry, turf can be laid at any time of the year! However, the biggest factor that affects the growth of new turf is not the time of the year, it is actually how well the area for your new lawn has been prepared. In terms of the optimum season to lay turf regarding weather, we would strongly recommend the Spring or Autumn months. The reason for this is that the seasonal weather is usually a balance of sun and rain whilst the soils friable texture makes preparation easy.

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR GARDEN FOR NEW TURF?

It is simple to measure your garden for new turf yourself. In order to measure a square/rectangular lawn, you will need to measure the width and the length. Simply take the two numbers and multiply on by the other to calculate the area of your new lawn. However, when it comes to measuring a circular lawn, we would recommend using an online calculator to help find the area of your project.

If you have an irregular shaped lawn, it can be difficult to know where to start. However, begin by sketching out the entire area you want to turf, you don't need to be overly accurate as long as you have drawn all the areas you want to turf. Next, split the various areas into smaller squares, do this by drawing lines across your sketch to form smaller square/rectangular areas. That said, in some cases, you may need to make a generous guess. Lastly, measure the various areas and multiply each one for a square/rectangular lawn as shown above and add together.

When calculating the amount of turf required, we strongly advise that you add an extra 5% of turf to allow for cuts to ensure complete coverage.

WHAT PREPARATION DOES A NEW LAWN NEED?

Laying a new lawn is not difficult – but preparation is everything! The aim is to remove stones, weeds and roots from the site and to improve the condition of the soil to aid root growth.

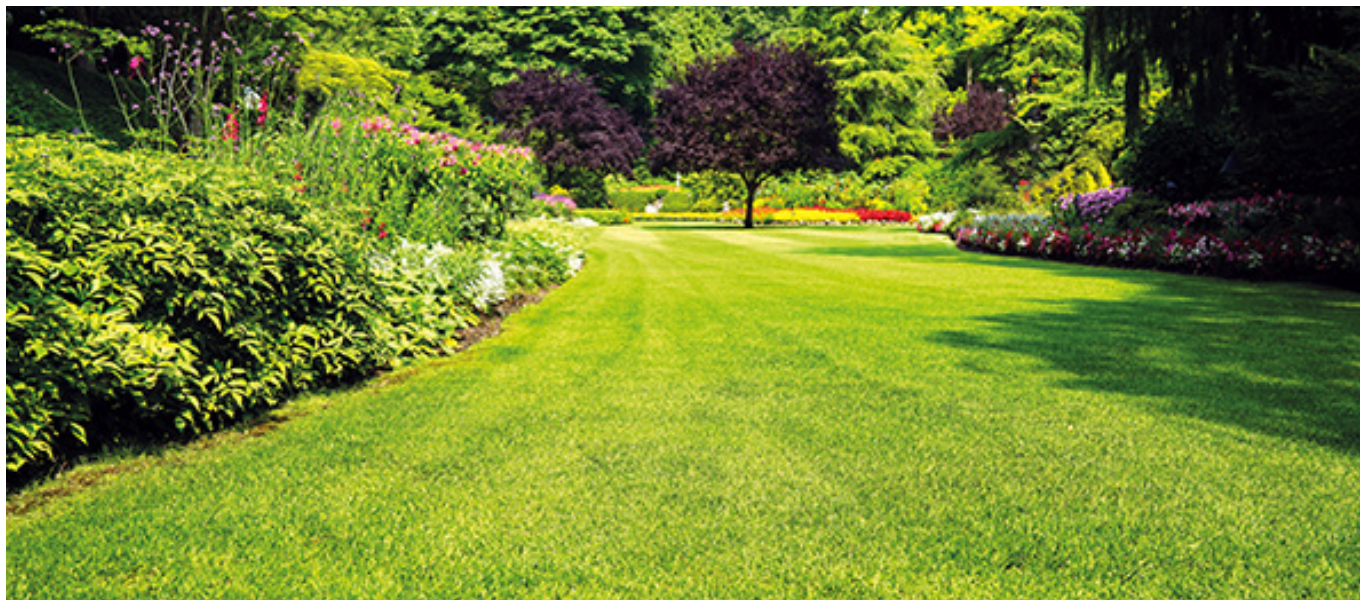
Step 1: Dig the area over using a fork or a rotovator, dig the soil well, removing all large stones, roots and other debris. If possible, leave the soil to settle for a few days – you can also remove any weeds that appear during this time.

Step 2: Level and aerate the soil by raking it both ways (shallow dips and rises are fine but avoid steeper slopes as these will make the lawn difficult to mow). Remove any additional stones that come to the surface; and if you are adding topsoil, do this after raking.

Step 3: Heeling in! It's now time to walk slowly up and down the area in each direction to heel the soil in, letting your heels press down into the soil. This firms the surface but without overly compacting it. However, if it's wet you'll just create mud, so wait for the area to dry off a little first.

Step 4: Final raking. Following the 'heeling in', rake the area once more, working from different directions to create a smooth flat surface. If you're adding a pre-turf fertiliser such as our Rapid Roots Pre-Turfing & Seeding Feed, now is the time to add it, raking it gently into the soil to a depth of a few millimetres.

More info over >



WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED TO LAY TURF?

- Thick gardening gloves
- Sturdy boots
- Sharp spade or turf cutting tool
- Wheelbarrow
- Garden Fork or Rotovator
- Landscaping rake (a wide toothed metal rake)
- Laying boards (scaffold board or similar sized pieces of wood)
- Straight line (a length of string with a stick to secure each end)
- Knife or edge-trimmer (an old kitchen knife or saw is perfect)
- Hosepipe with spray bar
- Stiff broom

HOW TO LAY YOUR FRESH TURF?

Laying your freshly cut turf is easy as long as you follow a few simple steps;

Step 1: You need to start by putting down a 'straight line', this will give you a straight line to work to.

Step 2: Start from an outside edge – lay the first roll widthways slightly overlapping the boundary (you can trim this back when you have finished). Press carefully to make good soil contact but without squashing the turf. If your lawn has curved edges, set your 'straight line' across the lawn at an appropriate point and work from the straight line in both directions towards the curved edges. You can then trim the edges to suit.

Step 3: Continue laying each roll of turf end on end, until you have completed the first row of turf along an entire length.

Step 4: Now start the next row. If you need to stand on the laid turf, use a 'laying board' to avoid denting or squashing your newly laid turf. It is important to stagger each row so that the ends do not line up (they should alternate like the vertical joints in a brick wall). When you start the next run, cut the first turf in half and lay this, butting the next full size turf up against it (the end joints should not line up). Repeat this every second row of turf.

Step 5: Continue like this, butting and pushing the edges together for a tight joint, but being careful not to stretch the turf.

Step 6: Finally, you will need to trim any untidy edges with an old wood saw or sharp serrated knife – but remember to use the planks to avoid walking directly on the freshly laid turf.

Step 7: Your newly laid turf must be watered well so that the water penetrates the soil but without turning it into a mud bath. You

can gently pull back a piece to inspect the soil underneath. In hot weather, be sure to water as soon as you have laid your new lawn and if you are laying a large lawn, water each section as you go.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU WATER YOUR NEW TURF?

Your new turf must be kept moist until it has fully established. If it's not raining you will need to water the turf yourself. In hot, dry or windy conditions you may have to water twice or even three times a day; and water immediately should you see any signs that the turf is drying out or shrinking.

If you do find you haven't given enough water and gaps appear in between the rows and joints of turf, fill the gaps with a little soil mixed with seed and water in.

Eventually, you will see healthy new white roots when you carefully lift a corner of the turf, and you know these are established when it becomes difficult to pull back the turf.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU MOW YOUR NEW LAWN?

During the spring and summer, your new turf will be ready for its first mow in 7 to 10 days after laying. But make sure it's a gentle cut! You just want to level the top of the grass, so raise the cutting height of your mower and use a grass box to collect the cuttings. Then continue to cut (twice a week in the spring or once a week in the summer), never removing more than one-third of the current height.

If you have laid turf in the autumn, follow the spring guidelines. But for winter-laid turf, mow only if it is still growing, otherwise, leave it until spring. And remember – always make sure your mower blade is sharp!

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU FEED YOUR NEW TURF?

If you used a pre-turfing fertiliser, your new turf will be happy for at least two months. After that, follow a regular feeding regime using the correct seasonal feeds (caution – applying the wrong nutrients can damage your lawn. Please refer to our 'Routine Lawn Feeding Guide'.

More info over >



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TROUBLESHOOT YOUR NEW LAWN?

Grass is a very robust plant, and if you have prepared the ground properly and followed our laying guidelines you shouldn't have any problems with your new lawn. Nevertheless, you may notice a few natural phenomena in the first few weeks while it establishes into its new environment.

After a few weeks, it's not uncommon to notice small toadstools popping up in the new lawn. This is nothing to worry about! It is particularly common in the autumn, or during warm and wet conditions, and will soon sort itself out following the first mowing's.

All soil contains dormant fungal spores. These can lay inactive for years and years – but when the soil is disturbed, they can spring back to life and grow into toadstools. You don't need to remove them – they will disappear after a couple of mows without doing any permanent damage to your lawn.

There are different types of toadstool and most have been tested and shown to be non-toxic. However, we advise you take normal precautions to ensure that youngsters (and inquisitive adults) don't eat them, just in case.

Your new lawn might also develop flowering seed heads. Grass produces these naturally although they are more prevalent in the late spring/summer especially if the weather turns hot and dry (drought conditions).

When turf is harvested, the majority of the root system is cut off. This is stressful to the grass plants and they produce seed heads as a means of self-preservation. The seed heading will reduce once the new turf has established a new root system, which can take 6-8 weeks. Seed heading will also reduce if the new lawn receives adequate nutrients and is mowed regularly with a sharp blade.

TURF CARE FAQS

Q: How thick is the turf cut?

A: The soil on the back of the turf is cut approximately half an inch thick (12.5mm).

Q: Can I lay turf directly on top of my old worn-out lawn?

A: No, the old lawn needs to be fully removed and the soil should be prepared as if for a seedbed for the best results.

Q: How deep should the soil be beneath the turf?

A: We would recommend a minimum of 4-6" (10-15cm) of good quality, free-draining, fertile soil.

Q: Why do you recommend using pre-turfing fertiliser?

A: When the turf is harvested, the roots are removed. By adding nutrients to the soil you are encouraging rapid re-establishment of the elaborate root system which is crucial to the health of your new lawn. The roots absorb water and nutrients from the soil.

Q: Why should I apply fertiliser to my lawn?

A: Turf is alive and like all living things, it requires water, food and oxygen. By feeding the lawn, you give it the best chance of becoming strong and healthy. It will build immunity against wear and tear, diseases and weeds, and it will be more capable at fending off pests.

Q: Do you deliver to my area?

A: We deliver to almost all UK addresses except some areas in the Highlands and Islands. This is because we are unable to arrive the next day and therefore, we wouldn't be able to deliver fresh turf.

Q: How often should I water my turf?

A: You should water your turf daily, both in the morning and evening for the first week to 10 days, or until the roots have established in your soil. You can check by lifting a corner of the turf to see if it is adhering to the soil. Once rooted, water occasionally as the weather dictates.

Q: When should I mow the lawn?

A: Once the turf has rooted and is clearly rooted in the soil when you try to lift a corner, normally 7-10 days, you can set your mower to its highest setting and clip the top growth. Don't remove more than 25% of the grass plant with the first cut. Gradually reduce the height with each subsequent cut to the height you like to maintain your lawn.

Q: When is the best time of year to lay a new lawn?

A: We supply turf all year round, but we consider the best seasons for delivery to be the spring and autumn months when the weather is cooler, the turf is still growing and there is less risk of your turf drying out. Nonetheless, you can still get good results in the summer and winter months by following the guidelines above.

Q: How long can the turf be left before I lay it?

A: We recommend that you lay your turf on the day it is delivered. If you don't get it all laid on the day, make sure that you unroll any remaining turf so that it is revealed to the open air and give it a light water. This will keep it healthy.



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