



## MOWING

The best way of creating a thick, lush, tidy lawn is to mow it regularly. This deters weeds as they can't get a foothold

before being mowed off.

For the first cut of the year mowers should be set at 3cm in height. Then when lawns grow quicker in spring and summer blades should be lowered to 2cm. Weekly cutting is best but not always practical.

Grass in shady areas under trees will not grow as quickly as grass in full sun so you may need to mow less often. Also, in prolonged drier spells in summer allow grass to grow longer and mow less often. Your lawn may turn brown due to a lack of water.

However, do not be alarmed it will green up again in the autumn when the rain returns.

## EDGING

Why is it important to trim the edges of grass after mowing it? It gives a clean neat edge and prevents the grass from spreading into borders. The best cut is achieved by using long-handled edging shears.

If edges are uneven or out of alignment you can recut them by using a half-moon edging tool. For a straight line you can use a piece of wood or a stretched piece of string as a guide. For a curved edge you can use a hose pipe as a guide or simply judge it by eye.

Damaged edges that have fallen away, perhaps by someone stepping heavily on them, can be a challenge to repair. The best way of doing this is to use a flat spade or half-moon edging tool to cut a small rectangle. Then lift it up by sliding the spade under the rectangle at a depth of about 5cm. In the space scatter some "Growmore" to aid rooting. Then turn the rectangle and firm it down so you have the fallen away damaged part in the middle of the lawn. The edge can be cut to shape as in the previous paragraph. The fallen away dip in the middle of the lawn can now be filled with compost and seed before watering. Then in a few weeks you will not be able to see where you had the issue.

## REPAIRING LAWNS

If you have bare patches in your lawn there are two methods of repair that can be undertaken:

### Turf

- Cut around the edge of the affected area with a "half-moon cutting tool" to a depth of around 5 to 7cm. Then, use a spade to get underneath the affected area and lift it clean out of the ground.
- In the space scatter some "Growmore" to aid rooting and add some "top soil" to level the base of the hole. Then cut your turf to size and put it in the hole. Fill the edges with "top soil" so that the new turf knits in with the rest of the lawn. Water the turf if there is no rain for a couple of days and mow after the grass reaches 5cm in height.

### Seed

- The process is the same as above but you fill the hole to the level of the existing grass soil. Then you sow seed evenly adjusting the amount as per the instructions on the seed mix that you choose. Water if you are not expecting rain for a couple of days. Only mow once the grass has reached 5cm in height.

### For Sparse Areas

- If your lawn is sparse it is possible to over-seed. This effectively means sowing grass seed on top of existing sporadic or slightly patchy grass. Mix equal proportions of seed and "top soil" in a bucket with a small amount of "Growmore." Spread the mixture on the target area. Water if no rain falls. Then only mow once the grass reaches 5cm in height.

## FEEDING LAWNS

Feeding lawns will help to keep them green and lush. It gives the grass more vigour helping to prevent weeds and moss from establishing. All feeds should only be used when lawns are in active growth. For example, mid-March to early-October. There are many treatments you can use of which some are targeted at different times of the year with only the essential ingredients for the time of year in them.

## MOSS ON LAWNS

Moss occurs due to drought, waterlogging, shade and a lack of aeration. You can treat lawns from mid-March to early-October. It is usually possible to apply a combined "weed feed and moss killer" doing several jobs for the effort of one. You can also aerate your lawn by using a garden fork to pierce the soil surface. If shade is the big cause, once the moss is removed, you can over-seed the area with a shady lawn seed mix.

# LAWNS



In 2012 the British spent over £54 million on lawn fertilisers and a further £127 million on lawn mowers (Radio 4: What's the Point of Lawns?)

So what is it about grass that makes people seek a weed-free, striped, sharp edged piece of perfection?

The author Francis Bacon in a 1625 essay "Of Gardens" suggests that "nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass that is finely shorn." Roses and herbaceous borders never look better than when presented with the foreground or backdrop of a lush green healthy lawn.

Also as modern living and car ownership has meant many front gardens are being concreted over back gardens are increasingly providing valuable playing space for children and even the big children inside us all who like to join in with the ball games.

It is also possible to add extra interest to your lawn by planting early season bulbs such as Snowdrops, Daffodils and Crocus to give a burst of colour.

So whether you are looking for a perfectly striped lawn to rival day one of Wimbledon or a hardwearing lawn to keep children active this leaflet will give you advice on how to achieve it.

## LAYING NEW LAWNS – USING TURF

Whether you are filling in bare patches or sowing an entirely new lawn laying turf is a quick way to get an instant result. You can also walk on your new lawn after three or four days - much sooner than if you sow seed. This means that this option is often preferred by people who have children or pets.

You can lay turf anytime from Spring through until early Winter provided the ground is not frosty or soggy. Before buying the turf prepare your soil. This is the key to future success.

### Preparing Soil

- Firstly, it is best to spray perennial weeds with a “fast-acting-weed-killer” and allow them to die down killing the root otherwise they may grow through your new lawn.
- You can then dig and loosen your soil. The soil should be levelled to a fine tilth. After cultivating leave the area for a few days to settle. If any weeds come through in this time spray them with a “fast-acting-weed-killer.”
- To get the surface entirely level it is vital to tread the area down several times in different directions. Fill in any gaps or dips with “top soil” and again tread down the whole area several times in different directions. This will prevent the lawn from sinking.
- Measure the area you want to cover and order your turf.
- Prior to laying your turf apply and rake in 70 grams of “Growmore” to your soil. This will help the new turf to root into the soil.

### Laying the New Turf

- Begin at one corner or side of the area to be covered with turf. The person laying the turf should always face the bare soil. Use wooden boards to spread your weight and avoid creating indentations in the soil or turf. If an indentation is caused in the soil fill it in and tread it down.
- Lay the turves with a staggered joint pattern similar to brickwork. The turves should be closely butted together avoiding gaps.
- Cut the lengths of turf to shape using a “half-moon cutting tool” to achieve the lawn shape that you want
- Once laid the turf can be lightly firmed down with a light roller or by lightly treading across the wooden boards until all of the turf has been firmed down.
- Next, lightly brush “top soil” into the joint gaps. This will

help the turves to knit together and aid root development.

- After this leave, the turf alone and do not walk on it at all for three or four days. This will help the root development essential for a strong healthy lawn

### Ongoing Help

- In dry weather water the newly laid lawn once a week to keep it moist. This is of particular importance in summer.
- Do not over-water the lawn as this will cause shallow rooting and encourage unwanted weeds.
- Only mow the grass once the height reached 5cm. Mow with the blade set as high as possible initially.
- Feed the lawn after three months using a “lawn feed” only. Do not use a Feed that contains a weed or moss killer as this will harm newly laid lawns.

## LAYING NEW LAWNS – USING SEED

This is the most cost-effective way of laying a new lawn. In addition, you can choose from a vast range of grass seed mix that suits your individual needs. For example, you can buy mixes suitable for “shady” areas, “tough heavy-duty hard-wearing” and “all-year-round” germination uses.

All seed needs to be sown between the end of March and early October except for the “all-year-round” variety which as the name suggests can be sown anytime that frost is not predicted as it germinates at just 3°C.

You should prepare your soil for growing seed as for “Preparing Soil” in the “Laying New Lawns – Using Turf” section.

Calculate the area that you have and purchase right amount of seed in the variety mix that best suits your needs. Then to sow the grass:

- Divide the area to be sown into square metres
- Referring to the grass seed box portion the seed into square metre quantities. (For example, 30 grams per m<sup>2</sup>)
- Scatter half of the seed evenly in a lengthways direction. Then scatter the second half of the seed evenly in a widthways direction. This will aid you in getting a more even coverage.
- Repeat this process for every square metre of the lawn area you wish to sow.
- Lightly rake over the sown area covering the majority of the seed with soil. You can use a very thin layer of “top soil” to do this if required.

- If there is no rain for a couple of days water the seed gently with a hose using a very light spray or sprinkler setting.
- If no rain occurs keep the soil and seed moist as above.
- Then, adhere to the same “ongoing help” information in the “laying new lawns – using turf” section.

## PROBLEMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

### Birds

- Birds can cause problems with newly sown lawns. On a small lawn area, you can cover the area with either “netting” or “fleece” to keep them away.
- On larger areas you can use bird scaring devices or sow extra seed to the recommended amount to compensate for the loss.

### Weeds

- Perennial weeds that grow in grass and are large can be removed by digging them out and “patching” in the gap or by treating them with a wipe on “gel based weed killer.”
- “Selective lawn weed killers” will not kill grass but will kill lawn weeds such as dandelions, daisies and clover. However, this can’t be done for six months after sowing seed lawns.
- Often by mowing many smaller weed seedlings will be killed off but this does not kill off their roots so they can replenish

### Rust

- This is a common disease causing patches of grass to turn yellow. Often when you walk over the lawn footwear will turn orange due to spores.
- There is no chemical control. Regular mowing and the collecting of the clippings, pruning over overhanging trees improving air circulation and regular feeding of your lawn throughout the growing season will usually cure the problem
- Grass clippings affected by rust should not be home composted as the problem may carry over. It is best to put the clippings in your council recycling bin and the spores will be killed off in the high heated green waste recycling centre

Turf is usually available to buy from Easter until the Autumn. Call 01323 488188 to check the availability