

J&B Farnaby

(Scotch Corner)

Premier Turf Growers & Top Soil suppliers for over 30 years

Fact Sheet Quick Guide to Laying a Lawn

A lawn can be laid at almost any time of the year, but try to avoid extremes in the weather, such as very cold temperatures where frost is likely, or very hot and sunny days in summer...

Step 1 - clear the site and markout

Using a scaled plan of the garden, mark out the position where the lawn will be situated using your pegs and line, then clear the site of any vegetation and large stones. Break up the entire surface with a garden fork.

Step 2 - level the site

Level the surface. This can be best achieved by raking soil from any high spots into the hollows, firming with your feet as you go.

For most lawns your eye will be accurate enough, a few undulations are acceptable.

Step 3 - tread your soil all over

Once a level area has been achieved, tread the soil all over to ensure it is evenly compacted.

You may need to rake over the surface and repeat the process up to three times.

Step 4 - laying your turf rolls

Starting at one edge, roll out the first couple of turves to form a straight row. Now lay a wooden board on top of this row and start to lay the next row. Stagger the joints like a brick wall, so no two ends match and remember to butt them up tightly to each other.

Continue in this fashion until the entire area has been covered, ensuring the turf goes at least 50mm or 2" over the edges.

Step 5 - air pockets & top dressing

Firm the turf with the back of your rake to make sure there are no trapped air pockets and brush top dressing into the gaps for the best results.

Step 6 - edge cutting your turf lawn

Now neaten the edges to the shape you have marked out with your line.

If it is a straight edge, use one of your (straight) wooden boards as a guide and cut along this, or for curved edges use a hose or rope as a guide.

DIY tips for laying garden lawns

- Use your wooden boards all the time when laying your lawn.
- Try not to walk on your lawn for two weeks.
- Wait at least two weeks until mowing new lawns.
- Keep your new lawn damp until well established.

Ideally choose a week when rain is forecast after you have laid your rolls of turf as this will ensure they will be watered for you. Also, when preparing the soil in readiness for the lawn, the soil should not be sticking to the bottom of your boots too much - if it is, it's too wet to prepare effectively.



www.jbfarnaby.com

t : 01748 824594 / 01325 377725 e : sales@farnaby-turf.co.uk

Brough Moor Farm, Scurragh Lane, Skeebay, Richmond, North Yorkshire. DL10 5EF



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Fact Sheet 1

Preparation and cultivation

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Cultivated turf allows you to enjoy a lawn of instant beauty and maturity without the inconvenience and time consuming problems of seeding.

In order to guarantee that the turf you buy is of the highest quality you should purchase from a member of the Turf Producers International UK which has a quality assurance policy.

To ensure the best results and a quality finish to your new lawn the following steps should be carried out.

Please remember, a turf is a mass of living plants and a certain amount of care and maintenance will be required to ensure it grows to its full potential.

Preparation



Ground preparation is vital to the future of your new lawn. Inadequately prepared and unfertilised ground will never give satisfactory results.

Existing turf should be moved by cutting under with a spade. Soil needs to be turned over to a depth of 15cm. This can be achieved by either digging over the area or by using a rotovator.

Ensure the area is free of any debris, stones, weeds or old turf.

Fertiliser

A pre-turfing fertiliser should be applied and raked into the soil. The manufacturers application rate should be followed for the best results.

Raking

The ground should be raked over to produce a smooth surface. At this stage the ground may be lightly rolled or firmed by foot to reveal any soft



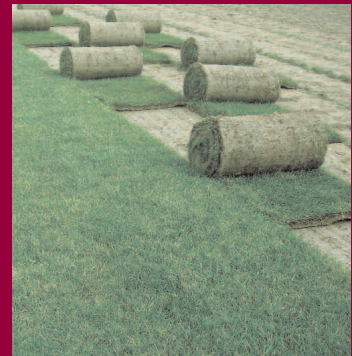
areas which can then be raked until the ground is evenly firm and smooth. A wide rake makes levelling easier. The ground should be firm but not compact.

Your Lawn is now ready to turf!

Ordering

Measure your proposed lawn area accurately in square metres, see our online calculator to help you measure your lawn.

Turf is supplied in rolls for easy laying. As turf is generally cut to order you should contact your supplier giving as much notice of delivery date as possible - and in any case at least 24 hours.



Ensure you give full details of the amount of turf required (in square metres), your name, full address, telephone number and the date required.

Turf should be laid within 24 hours of delivery, therefore the preparation work should be carried out in advance of the turf arriving



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Fact Sheet 2

Laying your Turf

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After following the advice from Fact Sheet 1 you can now move onto

Laying Your Turf



Start by laying one strip of turf around the outside of the lawn. Avoid using small strips at the edges as these may dry out and perish. Turf can be shaped to follow gently curved borders.

Lay the first row along the longest straight line and work across the lawn staggering the joints in each row - as in brickwork.

Butt and push the edges and ends against each other but do not stretch the turf. Use a sharp knife or half moon spade to cut the end of a row.

Avoid walking on newly laid turf - boards should be placed down for walking on, or walking along.

Ensure that the turf has full contact with the soil.

Watering Turf

Newly laid turf must be watered within half an hour of installation. Give the turf a really good soaking and check that the water has seeped through the turf and into the soil below (turn up a corner to see that this has happened).



This watering must be repeated until the turf has established. Weather conditions will dictate the frequency of the water required.

Ensure that your new lawn has enough moisture to survive hot, dry or windy weather. If laid during a hot dry period, watering should be repeated at least three times a day, otherwise twice daily should be sufficient.

Mowing

We recommend that you do not mow your new turf until it has rooted. This can be easily checked by lifting up a corner to see if the roots have attached to the soil.



Your lawn mower should be set to the highest setting - it is important that the lawn is not scalped during early mowings. Mow your new lawn often, each time removing no more than one third of the grass height. Once established the grass height can be reduced gradually to your ideal level. Optimum heights between 15mm and 35mm.

Lawn Feeding

Feeding in the first 8 weeks will not be necessary as a pre-turf fertiliser has been applied. There are many lawn feeds available and you should contact your T.P.I. UK member for their recommendation. Manufacturers instructions should always be carefully followed.



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Fact Sheet 3

General Lawn Maintenance

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Your J & B Farnaby lawn provides the best lawn that nature and modern technology can provide. It gives you the best foundation on which to build a lawn that should give years and years of pleasure.

However, once it is laid, it is up to you to maintain and care for it, if it is to perform in the long term. With living, growing plants there are no short cuts or easy answers to perfection. Grass is no exception and constant care and attention will produce the ongoing results you are seeking.

INITIAL MAINTENANCE OF NEW LAWN

Mowing the new lawn



The turf should have established (i.e. rooted into the ground) within 2 weeks during mild growing weather, providing it has received sufficient watering. It will be slower during the winter months due to the lower soil temperature. Once you are happy that the turf has established

sufficiently, and always before the grass gets two inches high, mowing can commence. Adjust your mower to a high setting so that only the tips of the grass leaves are removed first. If mowing is too severe it can inhibit establishment of the roots and even kill the grass.

If you have not levelled the site adequately, or if it has settled due to insufficient consolidation, the mowing may leave brown areas where the grass has been cut too short. This is one of the most common faults with new lawns. You should raise the height of the mower for subsequent mowing and meanwhile correct the levels by rolling lightly and/or top dress the depressions with soil.

Fertilising the new lawn

Nitrogen, one of any plants' essential nutrients for lush leaf developments, washes out from the top soil extremely quickly, therefore it is extremely important to replenish with a suitable fertiliser on a regular basis. This should be carried out every 4-6 weeks during the growing season, as nitrogen applied late in the Autumn or Winter will cause lush leaf development, which could be scorched by frost at this time of year.

ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE OF ESTABLISHED LAWNS

Mowing the established lawn

Mowing should be done regularly as required, depending on growing conditions, and at least once per week from Spring to Autumn. Avoid leaving the lawn un-mown for any number of weeks. If the height of cut is to be reduced, it can be gradually reduced over a number of weeks during the main growing season, but NEVER TAKE MORE THAN 25% of the initial height of the grass once cut, and never mow the grass closer than 1/2 inch. During the winter, if mild conditions prevail, mow whenever frost is not imminent.

Feeding the established lawns

This is the single most important factor which leads to the quality of the lawn deteriorating. Lawns, like all living organisms require regular feeding if they are to remain in a healthy condition. If they are not fed regularly, the grass plants thin out and cannot compete with weeds and moss.

All established lawns should be fed in the Spring at the first real signs of any growth. This enables the lawn to start the season off with good, vigorous, healthy growth ahead of any germinating weeds. A Spring/Summer lawn feed is available from any garden centre, and it should be applied as stated on the product label. The same feed should be applied regularly throughout the growing season, normally every 4-6 weeks with the last Spring/Summer feed before the end of August.

To maintain a healthy state and a good colour throughout the winter period, it is essential the lawn is given an Autumn/Winter feed. Again this is available from any garden centre and it should be applied as stated on the product label.



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As gardeners we spend many hours tending to our lawn and take pride when it looks the way we want it to look. But there is for every gardener the frustration of having to watch as our lawns are decimated by a succession of unwanted and unruly pests; some of which are above ground, some of which attack from beneath the surface.

Leatherjackets



Leatherjackets are crane flies larvae (Daddy long legs) and when allowed to hatch in poorly drained lawns they can cause any amount of damage.

It is common for the larva to feed on the grass stems base and the roots during the spring months resulting in patches of yellow and brown grass that stands out during the dry summer months.

One of the ways in which to ensure these nasty little larva don't take hold is to make sure your lawn is properly aerated for better drainage. Make holes in the lawn at regular intervals ensuring the water has somewhere to go other than to lie in the surface of the soil just below the grass.

Your local nursery or garden centre should also be able to recommend an insecticide which will deal with leatherjackets.

Chafer Grubs

Chafer grubs are the larvae of the chafer beetle. They can cause problems on any grassed area including lawns by feeding on the roots of grass plants.

The adults range from 9 to 39mm in length and have different coloured heads and wings cases. The adults emerge between the end of May and July depending on the weather conditions in spring. They may feed on shrubs and trees before laying the eggs into grassed areas.



Larvae hatch about 2 weeks later and begin to feed on grass roots until late September when they move deeper into the soil where they pass the winter. The larvae have white bodies curved in letter C shape, light brown heads, with 3 pairs of legs.

When the larvae are small they do not cause much damage to grass unless they are in very high numbers. As they grow bigger, they cause more damage. Symptoms may appear as straw coloured weak areas of grass where the roots have been damaged. In most cases the larvae are discovered when birds or mammals, such as badgers or foxes, begin to rip up areas of the turf looking for the grubs. They are a protein filled delicacy to birds and mammals, which can destroy large areas when looking for them.

It is very difficult to prevent chafer larvae being laid into the lawn. Females prefer moist conditions and so the lawn should not be watered if adult activity is noted. However, where larvae are present the lawn should be kept well watered to try and counteract the grass from dying due to drought as a result of a weaker root system. In most cases all that can be done is to employ bird and mammal deterrents and tidy up any damage caused.

The larvae can be controlled by removing them by hand or applying a biological nematode.

Moles

There is no mistaking the presence of moles - the ugly mounds of dug out earth are a sure fire sign that these burrowing creatures have found their way into your garden.

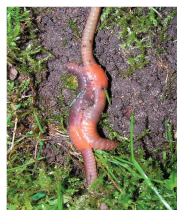


Moles are primarily on a diet of earthworms so if you have a problem with earthworms in your garden then you may find that you also have a problem with moles. You should be warned in advance that moles are notoriously difficult to get rid of once they have made their way in under your lawn especially if the earthworm population is ripe for the picking.

There are many tried and tested ways of getting rid of moles including the use of moth balls, disinfectant, burning paper in the openings to their runs and placing smoke cartridges in their runs.

However the best way to get rid of these underground pests is to have them trapped or poisoned by a professional - do not attempt this yourself especially if you have children or pets that also run or play on the lawn.

Earthworms



Earthworms bring with them their own unique set of problems, not least the fact that an increased earthworm population can lead to an infestation of moles.

Traditionally earthworms are seen as a beneficial element to growing your lawn but as they form casts they fail to aerate the lawn properly which leads them to poor drainage. Also the casts are

unsightly and provide food for moles and birds who will also damage the lawn if not dealt with.

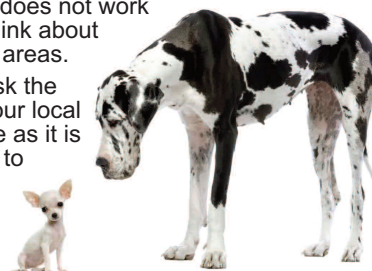
Ask your local nursery or garden centre if they currently stock any non chemical insecticides that can deal with the problem of earthworms. Ensure that your lawn is properly aerated and that you rake away any casts you find on the lawn before they have the chance to attract the unwanted attentions of any burrowing underground dwellers.

The Family Dog

The family pet is to be cherished and children enjoy nothing more than playing with them on the lawn, however dogs, male or female, have no sense of lavatorial etiquette and will urinate as and when they feel they have to.

Large brown patches on your lawn may indicate that the family pet has been using the lawn as its toilet and as such the urine, and the acid therein, can burn the grass. There are no tried and tested ways of curing the problem only the regular watering of the affected patches to return much needed moisture. If this does not work then you may need to think about reseeding the damaged areas.

As always it is best to ask the advice of someone at your local nursery or garden centre as it is not uncommon for them to have handy tips which you may not have heard of before.



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It is very common for small brown toadstools to appear in recently laid turf. They are of particular concern to parents of small children, who worry that they may be harmful if eaten.



Why do they grow in my lawn?

When turf is being harvested, damage is caused to the roots and other underground parts of the turf. Microscopic bacteria and fungi, present in all soils, decompose this dead and dying tissue once the turf has been laid. This process of biological decomposition, which breaks down organic matter in the turf, occurs naturally throughout the garden.

For most of its life cycle the fungi that feed on the dead material in the turf are too small to easily see. However, under certain weather conditions the fungi move into a reproductive phase and produce the small brown toadstools found in the turf. The spores (serving the same purpose as seeds) released from the toadstools fall to the ground or are carried long distances on the wind. The air is full of the microscopic spores of various fungi and they will only grow if they find suitable conditions. In the case of newly laid turf, the spores only grow if a suitable food source remains in the turf. Once the dead material in the turf has gone, the toadstools will go as well. It is very unlikely that they will return in quantity.

When do toadstools appear?

Toadstools are commonly seen whenever the weather is warm enough. When you water newly laid turf, you provide an ideal warm, moist microclimate for the fungus that produces the toadstools to grow. In suitable conditions toadstools are produced a few days after laying the turf. They emerge in a flush of

growth and may persist for a few weeks at most, then disappear. Occasionally, a second brief outbreak may occur, possibly during the next period of warm moist weather. If turf is laid in cold weather the fungi will not appear until the temperature rises and conditions are moist. If decomposition is not complete when winter comes and cold weather stops growth of the fungi, more toadstools may form the following year. It is most unusual for toadstools of this type to be produced in the year after that.

What are they?

The most common of these toadstools is the "brown hay cap", but other species may be involved.

Is my lawn diseased?

In some gardening books, the only reference to toadstools in turf is in connection with fairy rings, which can be a very serious problem on mature lawns. The small brown toadstools found in newly laid turf are completely different from those found in fairy rings, and have no long term consequences. If toadstools of colours other than brown are found, it is likely that they are living on buried dead wood, for example tree roots. In this case, the toadstools will be found immediately above the decaying wood. Removing the wood will prevent fungi of this type from growing.

Are they poisonous?

Without accurate identification, it is impossible to say whether toadstools are poisonous. As a precaution, it would be wise to keep small children away from them since they may be harmful if eaten in quantity, as is the case with many things found in gardens.

Can they be treated?

There are no fungicides recommended in the UK for use against these toadstools. However, since they are not damaging to the turf, and are part of a natural and temporary process, there is no need to treat them.

If you are worried about children eating them in garden, the best approach is to remove the toadstools from the lawn by mowing the affected area on a daily basis until no more are produced. Provided the lawn is not mown at less than 25mm height of cut this will not damage the turf. Alternatively, breaking their stems by brushing the toadstools will allow them to dry out and disappear – they are composed mainly of water.

Summary

It is very common for small brown toadstools to grow in cultivated turf in the weeks after laying - from whichever grower it is obtained. They are not damaging to the turf and are a temporary problem.



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