

Follow these steps for a beautiful, healthy and trouble-free lawn:

- Clear the site of all building materials (wood, cement, bricks, etc.), as well as any buried stumps, rocks, stones or other debris that is larger than 4-5 cm (2-3 inches) in diameter.
- Rough grade the entire area to eliminate any drainage problems on the property. This would include sloping the grade away from building foundations, eliminating or reducing severe slopes and filling low-lying areas. A tractor-mounted blade and/or box are most often used for rough grading, but if the area is smaller, it can be done with hand tools. The rough grading will probably uncover more debris that should be removed and not buried.
- Initial tilling, to a depth of at least 5 cm (2 inches), should be completed prior to adding any topsoil or soil amendments. This will control most annual weeds, alleviate subsoil compaction and permit a bonding of the topsoil to the subsoil and improve root penetration and water movement.
- Add topsoil to achieve a total topsoil depth of 10-15cm (4-6 inches), after firming. The topsoil should be a loamy sand, sandy loam, clay loam, loam, silt loam, sandy clay loam or other soil suitable for the area. To the extent possible, practical, affordable and available, incorporate humus (fully decomposed organic matter) into the topsoil.
- Test the soil pH with a chemical soil test to determine if any pH correction materials are required. Acidic soils (pH of 6 and below) can be improved with the addition of lime. The type (or source) and total amount of applied lime will be determined by the level of acidity and should be based on the recommendations of a reliable garden center or turf professional. Alkaline soils (pH of 7.5 and higher) can be improved with the addition of sulfur or gypsum. As with acidic soil correction materials, the type and total amount of materials will be determined by the level of alkalinity and should be based on professional recommendations.
- Finish grade the entire site, maintaining the rough grading contours and slopes, with a tractor-mounted box blade on large areas or heavy-duty rake on smaller sites.
- Roll the area with a lawn roller, one third full of water, to firm and settle the surface and reveal any low spots that should be filled to match the surrounding grade surface. If time permits, allow the area to settle further with rainfall or by applying irrigation water.

This site is now ready for turfgrass sod. With this degree of careful and thoughtful soil preparation, the resultant lawn will be absolutely beautiful and require less maintenance and smaller quantities of applied water, fertilizer and pesticides, as it maintains a high degree of density and uniformity and recovers much more rapidly from wear. For years to come, your investment in soil preparations will yield a high return.

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