

Lawn Care

A lawn can be easy to care for but remember it's made up of living plants and, as with all living things, their needs must be considered. Choose a grass that is suitable for your climate and conditions. Most grasses are sun-loving plants. In very shaded areas it may be better to select a non-grass ground cover.

Establishing a Lawn

Preparation for Growing Lawn

- ✓ Install any underground drainage that may be required.
- ✓ Bring in improved soil if necessary – 8-10 cm over a poor base.
- ✓ In heavy or clay soils, dig in some Yates Gypsum Claybreaker.
- ✓ Prepare surface by digging or rotary hoeing to a depth of 10 - 15cm.
- ✓ Rake and level surface. Water.
- ✓ Leave for two weeks until weeds germinate.
- ✓ Spray with Zero Glyphosate to destroy weeds.
- ✓ Within the next two days lightly rake surface.
- ✓ Blend in some Dynamic Lifter Organic pellets.
- ✓ Smooth out and adjust final levels with a rake.

Sowing lawn from seed

- ✓ Sow at right time of year - check your packet.
- ✓ Sow on a still day (grass seed is very light).
- ✓ Spread at a rate according to directions.
- ✓ Spread from side to side - in one direction and then another.
- ✓ Over large areas, mix seed with sand to get more even distribution.
- ✓ Rake lightly.
- ✓ Keep moist throughout germination period. In hot/windy weather this may involve watering three or four times each day.
- ✓ Mow for the first time when grass is 10cm in height.
- ✓ Yates All Season LawnSmart lawn seed will grow happily in a wide range of conditions.

Establishing a Lawn with Turf

- ✓ Follow soil preparation instructions but, instead of mixing in Dynamic Lifter pellets, use Dynamic Lifter Turf Starter (which also contains water-storing crystals to help prevent turf drying out in the establishment stage).
- ✓ Arrange for turf to be delivered as close as possible to laying time.
- ✓ After delivery, keep turf moist at all times.
- ✓ Begin laying turf in one corner and complete one strip before starting a new one.
- ✓ Stagger joints if possible.
- ✓ Lay across the slope.
- ✓ Topdress with 90:10 sand/loam to even out hollows that remain after turf is established.

Fertilising

Regular light fertilising during the growing season is better than infrequent, heavy fertilising. Use a correctly balanced fertiliser (such as Thrive Granular Lawn Food). Dynamic Lifter Lawn Food is made up of fine, slow release organic particles so it's less likely to harm earthworms and encourages biological activity in the soil. Dynamic Lifter Advanced for Lawns combines Dynamic Lifter particles with fast-acting nutrients. This give lawns a quick boost followed by a gentle trickle of organic nutrients. Yates Lawn Master is a slow release, top quality lawn food that evenly releases nutrients over a three month period.

Mowing

With established lawns, cut warm season grasses to 2.5 cm and cool season grasses to 5 cm. Cut as frequently as possible and remove as little growth as possible.

Never mow grass too low or 'scalp' the grass. Grasses need their leaves to make food for the plant and to shade the root system. Remove grass clippings or use a mulching mower.

Watering

Some lawns require a large amount of watering so, depending on the situation, other ground covers may be more appropriate.

Couch is the most drought tolerant grass. Other warm season grasses such as kikuyu, buffalo, carpet grass and Queensland blue couch are reasonably drought tolerant. As a rule, cool season grasses need more water, although turf type tall fescue is reasonably drought tolerant once established.

Water in the morning rather than the evening and give thorough less frequent soakings rather than short, frequent waterings. Don't allow surface runoff.

Grass Types

Warm Season's Grasses

These grasses grow best in late spring, summer and early autumn.

Couch - a hard wearing lawn that survives with little care. A running grass that can be established from seed, runners or turf. Only germinates reliably when temperatures are between 20 and 30 degrees celsius. Hates shade and likes a soil pH of 6- 7. Many cultivars available from turf suppliers. Hybrids are also available.

Kikuyu - A fast growing running grass that is vigorous and needs to be regularly mown to keep it as a good looking lawn. Takes a small amount of shade. Can be established from runners, seed and turf.

Buffalo - Running grass that forms a dense, coarse textured lawn that is hard wearing but slow growing. Grown from turf or runners. Newer cultivars (e.g. 'Palmetto' are softer and have improved shade tolerance.

Carpet Grass - Running grass with broad leaves. Best grown in subtropical or tropical areas. It is tolerant of acid soils but is regarded as a weed in finer turf.

Queensland Blue - A fine-leafed running grass that suits frost-free districts and has fine blue-green leaves. Queensland Blue Couch is for the warm climate lawn enthusiast and can be established from seeds or turf.

Durban Grass (Sweet smother grass) – Shade-tolerant running grass. Grow from turf or runners. Suits warmer climates. Mow high.

Empire Zoysia A recently released grass type that is said to have good wear and drought tolerance.

Cool Season's Grasses

Grow best in autumn and spring. Keep well watered during hot summers.

Chewings Fescue - This grass is often mixed with other grasses to form a fine turf. It is normally grown from seed.

Kentucky Bluegrass - Grown from seed. It is usually only available in seed mixtures. Spreads by underground runners so is self-repairing if damaged.

Bent - A fine textured lawn grass that has relatively high maintenance requirements. Can be established from runners or turf.

Turf Type Tall Fescue - selected forms of what was originally a coarse, hard wearing lawn grass. Modern cultivars are finer and softer. Once established, they are more drought tolerant than other cool season grasses but leaves always need to be left at least 5cm long. Available as seeds or turf.

Ryegrasses - Fine-leafed perennial ryegrasses are most often included in seed mixes. They germinate readily and grow quickly but need good watering during dry periods. Usually grown from seed.