

**Appendix G**

**Care and Maintenance Guide**

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# Care and Maintenance of Your New Plants

The following recommendations come from *The USDA Forest Service Tree Owner's Manual* ([www.treeownersmanual.info](http://www.treeownersmanual.info)), *Pruning Winners® Pruning Demystified* ([pruningdemystified.pdf](http://pruningdemystified.pdf)) and *Landscape Maintenance Guidelines* published by Faery's Nursery, Ransomville, NY.

## **General Care:**

### **Watering:**

Keep your trees and shrubs well watered. This is crucial during the first growing season to establish a stable root system and keep landscape lush and green. To water, give plants a thorough soaking allowing water to percolate through the soil down to the roots.

### **Fertilizer:**

Initial application of fertilizer will be completed by the landscaper during installation of plants, any subsequent fertilization is your responsibility. It is not necessary to apply fertilizer again until the following spring. At this time a mild fertilizer may be applied. Be sure to follow package instructions for appropriate application method and quantity. Your soil can be tested for pH levels to determine if pH altering products are necessary. This can be completed by obtaining an at home soil-testing kit. Contact your landscaper or local nursery for recommendations.

### **Pruning:**

Plants may be pruned to shape or remove weak, broken, or dead branches/leaves. Spent flowers may be pinched off to promote flowering the next year; be careful not to impact new buds developing at the base of the flower stem in the process. Pruning is not required; many native trees and shrubs do not need to be pruned and will grow successfully in their natural state.

**Blueberry, Beach Plum, Atlantic White Cedar:** It is recommended to trim these plants in late winter or early spring.

**Alder, Red Maple, River Birch:** It is recommended to trim these species either in summer or early fall. Trimming during late winter/spring is not recommended due to the heavy sap load, although it is unlikely to harm these species if done at that time.

**Eastern White Pine, Pitch Pine, Quaking Aspen, Scrub Oak:** It is recommended to trim these species during winter, the plant's dormant period. This helps to minimize the potential impact to new growth and reduces potential for disease or impairment of the individual tree.

**General:** Typically, trees should be pruned using the "head-back" technique by removing the tip of the branch. Dead wood and crossed branches can also be removed. Be sure to always use sharpened tools to make a clean cut and prevent tearing.

## ***Trees:***

Large trees will be staked during initial installation. Stakes should remain in place or adjusted to straighten, as necessary, for at least two growing seasons. Stakes should then be removed to prevent girdling or choking of the tree.

During the first few years, new trees will be focusing most of their energy on establishing a root system. New transplanted trees should be watered during spring through autumn months of the first three years after planting. In general, check the soil weekly to determine if watering is required. To do so, check the soil moisture at a depth of 6-inches below the surface, water if the soil is dry. Additionally, it is recommended you apply a layer of wood chips or mulch over the soil (a layer 2 to 4-inches thick); make sure to leave a ring around the base of the tree with no mulch, allowing the trunk to be exposed.

Over-watering can also damage the tree, be sure to moisten the soil but avoid water-logging.

**Broad-Leaf Evergreens:** To protect from harsh weather, apply burlap screens around sensitive plants during the winter season of the first few years or until a stable root system has been established. Watering these plants in late fall, prior to the ground freezing, will also aid in preventing them from dying during winter conditions.

# Care and Maintenance of Your New Lawn

The following recommendations come from The Lawn Institute ([www.thelawninstitute.org](http://www.thelawninstitute.org)), and the International Association of Hydroseeding Professionals ([www.hydroseeding.org](http://www.hydroseeding.org)).

## Usage (seeded areas):

- Use your newly seeded grass area sparingly until the roots are established (at least 2 to 3 weeks).
- Avoid concentrated play or rough use for at least 4 weeks.

## Usage (sod):

- While not as fragile as seeded areas after installation, some caution is necessary – avoid heavy or concentrated use for 3 to 4 weeks.
- This gives the roots an opportunity to firmly integrate with the soil and help the lawn to remain smooth. Any lateral movement or shearing (such as running around on the sod by humans or dogs) should be avoided for the first 4 to 6 weeks.

## Watering:

- On average, lawns need about 1 inch of water per week, either by rainfall or in combination with irrigation.
- For sodded areas, keep the below-turf soil surface moist with daily watering for two weeks following installation.
- Once established, let the lawn dry out between watering intervals. The healthiest lawns are produced when they are watered heavily at infrequent intervals.
- Look at your lawn to determine if it needs water. Grass in need of water will have a grey-blue cast to it. On an adequately watered lawn, footprints will completely disappear within minutes. On a lawn in need of water, footprints will still be visible after a half-hour or more.
- The best time to water your lawn is early morning, when there is generally less wind and heat.

## Mowing:

- Lawn can be mowed when 50% of it reaches a height of 2 ½ to 3 inches.
- Mow lawn to approximately 2" high. Never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade with a single mowing
- Keep mower blades sharp. Dull blades tear the grass and can cause grass to lose more water and become more vulnerable to stress and diseases.

## Fertilizing:

- Apply a nitrogen rich fertilizer 4-6 weeks following hydroseeding.
- The new lawn should then be fertilized at least two times during the year. Spring and fall applications are appropriate for most lawns.
- A soil test can help identify the precise needs of your lawn. Fertilizer and chemical applications will depend on climate, sod type, soil, insects, weed, and disease conditions.

## Pesticides:

- Pesticides or weed-killers should be avoided until lawn is well established.
- Wait at least 3 months before applying any pesticides to new lawn.



## Fall/Winter Care for Your New Sod Lawn



### THE FIRST 14 DAYS ARE CRITICAL

1. Lay the sod down the day you get it! A light fertilizing should be applied prior to your laying your sod. A “starter” fertilizer would be best. (Low in Nitrogen) If the starter fertilizer can’t be found, then an all-purpose fertilizer such as “Triple 15” can be used, just with a lighter application.
2. Now that the sod is on the ground, turn on your sprinklers and run each system at least 30 minutes. This watering should soak and hydrate the sod as well as the soil.
3. For the next 2 weeks, you will have to stay off the sod. Watering is essential. You must keep the sod in an “evenly moist condition.” This can be done by watering and estimated 2 times a day; 9AM and 1PM. How long do you water for? That will have to be up to you. “Low Flow” nozzles will have to be run longer. Nozzles that put out a lot of water will be run a shorter amount of the time. Soil type plays a large part in how long your sprinklers need to run and how often. Remember that you must keep the sod moist, **NOT SOAKED**. Do **NOT** let the sod dry out. Watch your sod. Standing water can result in overwatering. Too much water will result in problems as well as not enough.

### MOWING YOUR LAWN

1. After the 2 weeks of watering, it is time to mow. Turn the sprinklers off at least 2 days before you mow. Allow the soil to be dry enough to take foot and mower traffic. Do not cut more than 1/3 of height of your grass. Different sod types have different mow heights.
2. Cut the watering down to only 1 time a day, 9AM. Remember that sod does not grow as rapidly during the cooler months of the year.

## REDUCTION OF WATER AFTER ROOT DEVELOPMENT

1. How much and how often you water will always depend on the weather outside. The higher the temperature the more moisture evaporation occurs. Watering is most efficient if done during the early morning hours. 3AM is the coolest part of the day and there will be less loss of water due to evaporation.
2. During the fall/winter months, after the establishment period, watering may be reduced. Watering will also depend on the rainfall that your area is having. Sod does not grow very much during the fall/winter months. Mowing will be at a minimum. A good rule to follow is that you water less often, but longer periods of time. Deep watering is preferred because you want to encourage the roots to go down. Roots will stay where the moisture is. Shallow watering is not recommended.





## How To Care For Your New Sod Lawn (SUMMER)



### THE FIRST 14 DAYS ARE CRITICAL

The establishment of your new sod lawn is easy. Sod should be laid on your dry soil THE VERY DAY IT ARRIVES! If temperatures are above 90° the soil should be moistened the day before to cool soil temperatures and just before install. DO NOT OVER WATER so you or the installers are not working in muddy conditions. After the sod is installed the initial watering should soak the sod and hydrate the soil below many inches. All you have to do is water it and stay off. Keep the lawn moist at all times, preferably by frequent light sprinklings. The watering process should be repeated three times a day. DURING THE HOTTEST MONTHS OF THE YEAR, 80° PLUS, at approximately 8 AM, 11 AM and 2 PM (early, mid- morning and early afternoon), every day. DON'T LET THE LAWN DRY OUT!!! Remember the key is to KEEP IT MOIST, NOT SOAKED AND DO NOT LET IT DRY OUT. Too much water causes fungus.

### MOWING YOUR LAWN

A new sod lawn should be mowed for the first time between 12-14 days. Turn off your water for 1 to 2 days to firm the soil to allow foot and mower traffic. After your first mowing water ONCE A DAY at 8 AM for the following week. After your second mowing water EVERY OTHER DAY at 3 AM and adjust watering time to meet seasonal conditions. Delaying the first cutting allows for too much shading, blade widening and possible overgrowth. Set your lawn mower to mow 1/3rd of the height of the blade off, lowering a setting each mowing until the lawn is at mowing height. (Fescue sods are cut at 2-2.5" for home use) Never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade length at any mowing. Two mowing's in a week are sometimes needed during the first or second mowing to get desired blade height. Lawn mower blades should always be kept sharp to prevent torn grass, which develops unsightly white blade tops.

### WATERING YOUR LAWN AFTER THE FIRST 3 WEEKS

Watering is most effective if done during early morning hours, 3 AM, when sunlight and heat cannot cause excessive evaporation. After your lawn becomes established it requires approximately 1 1/2 inches of water per week, 1/2 inch every other day during the heat of the summer. Spring and fall may only require once or twice a week watering depending on weather conditions. Cut water back during the winter. Sometimes your lawn will only require watering



once or twice a month, depending on weather conditions. The soil should be soaked completely when watered. During the active growing season water should penetrate at least 6 inches into the soil to insure deep rooting. Soil types also are a large factor in how long and how often you water your lawn.

## FERTILIZING YOUR LAWN

A fertilizing should be applied prior to you laying the sod. (Example: All-purpose fertilizer 15-15-15 or 16-16-16 at a rate of 1lb per 100 sqft) Once established, the lawn will need regular fertilizing. Application of fertilizer should provide the nutrients needed to give the sod a healthy look all year round. This year round fertilizing could possibly be applied every six to eight weeks or longer depending on type of fertilizer, water and soil type. We also recommend using organic fertilizers when mixed with synthetic fertilizers.

Remember when you see a lawn that looks great it's because the owner has done a few simple things with consistency: Proper watering, mowing, and fertilizing are the keys to keeping your lawn looking healthy and the weeds to a minimum.

**WEED CONTROL** Weeds will appear in you new lawn. They come from seeds which have lain dormant in the ground or which have been carried in by wind or birds. Growing good healthy grass can best control these weeds. Grass that is properly watered, mowed, and well fertilized provides competition for weed plants to gain a stronghold. However, there are chemical remedies that will aid in the weed control of a mature lawn (after 3-4 mowing's), Post-emergent for grassy weeds or broadleaf weeds. Some chemicals are temperature sensitive be sure to check your labels. Preemergent can be used to keep crabgrass, spurge and approximately 35 other weeds out of your lawn. (First applied at late winter early spring) Should your lawn ever become damaged or have bare spots, reseed or sod immediately to prevent competitive weed growth from becoming established.

## LAWN DISEASES and INSECTS

The most common lawn diseases are known as Brown Patch, Dollar Spot, Rust and Fusarium. A lack of water can cause stress on your lawn, which will weaken it and make it more susceptible to disease. Over watering and too frequent watering, are most often the causes of lawn diseases. These can be checked and controlled with fungicides. (June thru Aug.). Lawn moths, cut worms and grubs are also very common and they are controlled with insecticide granules. (May thru Sept.)



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