

INFORMATION

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LAWNS from Seed & Turf

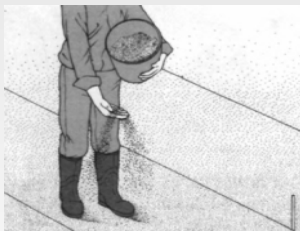
At one time, turf lawns were much more common than seed lawns. However, in recent years there have been considerable improvements in the quality, variety and availability of seed mixtures, and sowing is now an increasingly popular alternative.

Advantages of Seed The most important advantages that seed has over turf are that it is much cheaper to buy and there is less work involved in sowing than in laying turf. Seed can also be stored easily and will not deteriorate. Sowing can therefore be delayed until the weather conditions are exactly right.

Advantages of Turf The most obvious advantage of turf is that the lawn can be created and used almost immediately. Turf has an instant visual effect and it is easier to achieve a neat, well defined edge to paths and borders. Turf can also be laid in late autumn or winter, at which time it is too late for sowing grass seed.

CULTIVATION & SOIL PREPARATION 1) Kill weeds, using a systemic weedkiller, 2-3 weeks before digging. Dig deeply but do not bring sub soil to the surface. Clear all large stones and weeds. 2) If soil is heavy or poorly drained, work in a layer of peat as this helps to break down clay and assist drainage. 3) Rake to a fine tilth, incorporating a general fertilizer, e.g. 'Growmore' at 2 oz per sq yard. 4) Tread over to firm, rake and re-tread at right angles to the first treading, until level and firm, with a fine top. Extra work now will save a lot of work later on!

LAWNS FROM SEED **When To Sow** The most two suitable periods for sowing grass seeds are early autumn (*early September*) and spring (*April - Note that germination is slower at this time of year*). Sow during a period of calm, dry weather, when the surface of the seed bed is dry and the soil does not adhere to boots or to the wheels of a seed drill. There should however, be moisture just below the surface.



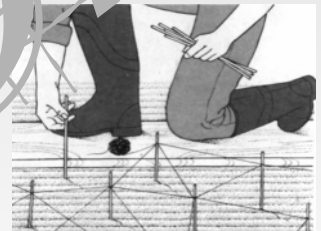
1. Divide the seeds into two halves and, if sowing by hand, broadcast one batch walking lengthways across the site and the other batch walking crossways.



2. If using a seed drill, lay a strip of hessian along the edge of the site and over-run. Again, sow half the seeds lengthways and the other half, crossways.



3. After sowing, lightly rake over the entire seedbed, taking care not to bury the seeds too deeply, otherwise they may not germinate. Do not roll because this tends to flatten or 'cake' the surface.

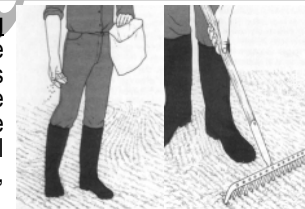


4. Protect from birds by inserting small twigs or sticks at intervals in the seed bed. Then twine black thread among them 3-4" above the soil surface.

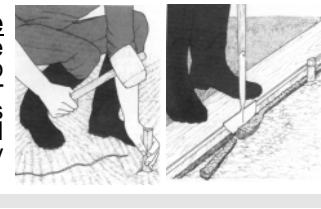
After germination The soil surface is often slightly lifted at germination. Therefore, when the young grasses are about 2-3" high, lightly roll when the surface is dry, using a light garden roller. Two or three days later, when the grass has recovered from rolling and is growing vertically again, cut it with a sharp-bladed mower.

LAWNS FROM TURF **When To Turf** Turf can be laid at any time of year, though not when frost or rain is present, but the best period for turfing is between October and February. Turfing during this period means that newly laid turf is then rarely subjected to the stress of drying winds or hot sunshine, and it usually inter-roots before such conditions occur.

1. Apply a dressing of fertilizer a few days before laying. The fertilizer encourages the turves to knit together and the roots establish. Do not feed if the soil is already rich and well manured. Rake in the fertilizer, incorporating it well into the soil.



2. Mark out the exact shape of the lawn and allow for the turves to extend an inch or two beyond its edges. This can later be trimmed after the turves have been laid and have settled down, to leave a neat, sharply defined edge.



3. Lay the turves in straight lines, ensuring that each turf is as close as possible to the preceding one. If a segment of turf is needed to complete a row, lay a whole turf at the end and place the segment behind it. Allow a 1-2" overlap at the edge.



4. Stagger the joints of turf by laying half turves. Do not walk on newly laid turf; instead lay down planks as pathways. This spreads the weight and prevents depressions being formed by heavy boots or heels.

After laying the turves Roll the lawn with a light garden roller, if one is available. Rolling is not essential but it will help to settle the turves. Next, apply a sandy top dressing at 3-4lb per sq. yard (this will protect the lawn from drying out and improve the level of its surface). Work the dressing well into the crevices between the turves using a broom or the back of a rake. Water your new lawn thoroughly, preferably using a sprinkler and never let it dry out as this will cause shrinkage. Leave at least 10 days before mowing and then only with the blades 1.5" high. Turf laid in Autumn or early Winter will not need mowing until Spring.

Information & Illustrations sourced from 'LAWNS, GROUND COVER AND WEED CONTROL' by David Pycraft

MIDDLETON (& HEAD OFFICE) E-mail: info@allinone.co.uk
ROCHDALE ROAD, MIDDLETON, MANCHESTER. M24 2RB
Tel: (01706) 711711 Fax: (01706) 759759

KNUTSFORD E-mail: knutsford@allinone.co.uk
LONDON ROAD, ALLOSTOCK, KNUTSFORD. WA16 9LU
Tel: (01565) 722567 Fax: (01565) 723818

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