

Here at Red Hen Turf Farm, we strive to make **Do-It-Yourself Lawn Care Do-able**. We hope you find this guide and our website helpful, and remember, if you EVER have any questions or concerns, give us a call. We're here to help!

29435 Darden Rd.

New Carlisle, IN 46552

PHONE: 574-232-6811 / Toll Free: 800-359-8035

Red Hen's Shared Text-Only Line 574-766-7633

EMAIL: turf@redhenturf.com / accounts@redhenturf.com

Visit our Website & Blog for lots of Information

[www.redhenturf.com](http://www.redhenturf.com)

In season hours are approximately

April—November

Monday—Friday 7:30am-4:00pm (EST)

Select Saturdays 7:30am—11:30am (EST)

Please see our website for detailed hours and holiday closings.

Off season hours may vary and run from approximately

December—March

Monday—Friday 8:00am-4:00pm (EST)

### Preparing to Install Sod

#### Prepare for Success BEFORE You Lay Sod.

Sod laying is not rocket science, but unless you do it fairly often, you may miss some important points that really affect the outcome of the job. If you consider the following points **before** you start laying sod - whether you're covering a large area or doing some patching - you will find the process easier and will end up with a nicer, healthier lawn.

#### Shade and Air Movement.

**Kentucky Bluegrass sod and our Fescue sod are ideal for full sun and light amounts of shade.** As a rule, **they need sunlight for a minimum of 4 hours per day.** Air movement also has a big effect. Trees that have high branches that let the air move are better sites for bluegrass, than a maple tree surrounded by a solid board privacy fence. Give us a call or visit [www.redhenturf.com](http://www.redhenturf.com) for more information about grass and shade or about our Kentucky Bluegrass vs. Fescue sod.

#### Recommended Tools.

- Shovels and Rakes to prepare the soil
- You might consider renting a Rototiller and/or Sod-Cutter
- A Wheelbarrow will make the job easier
- Cutting Tools - Sod can be cut with a variety of tools, even an old steak knife.
- Plenty of Hoses and Sprinklers if you don't have a sprinkler system.

#### The Scoop on Topsoil.

**Adding topsoil is not essential for installing and patching with sod but it provides some benefits.** Topsoil increases the soil's water and nutrient holding capacity, so if you do add it, the intervals between watering and fertilizing will be longer. If you do decide to add topsoil, 2 inches will provide good benefits **BUT you MUST mix it into the existing soil. If you cannot have the topsoil mixed into the existing soil, then do not apply it!** An unmixed layer of topsoil actually *prevents* grass from rooting deeply.

#### Measuring.

Our sod is sold by the square foot, so calculating how much you need is as simple or hard as measuring your site. Be sure to order enough to account for trimming because we cannot deliver you another 500 sq feet for the same price we just delivered you 5,000 sq feet. However, if you do under-measure, you can pick sod up at our farm for the same square foot price as we just delivered, within 3 days of last purchase. Need help measuring? Give us a call.

#### Removing Existing Lawn.

If your lawn is really small or you're patching a small area, shovels may do the trick. You could rent a **Sod-Cutter** to shave off the top grass evenly.

Another approach is to CORRECTLY use certain herbicides to kill off the old lawn. If you want to learn more about this option, give us a call. NOTE: Always read and follow the manufacturers label instructions when using any herbicide, pesticide or fertilizer.

#### Loosening The Soil & Leveling It Out ... A Landscaper Is Your Friend!

Basically, the goal is to loosen the soil at a depth of 2-3 inches, and level it out. Most builders provide homeowners with a rough grade that is done with a bulldozer that leaves the soil fairly level but usually compacted. Having a landscaper **tractor rake** a lawn to remove compaction and **level the soil** is money very well spent. Many landscapers work with builders and are happy to perform this service even if you will lay the sod yourself. A **rototiller** also does a good job of loosening the soil but you still need to **level** it. If you are adding topsoil, while it may cost a bit more, it is worth it to have the landscaper loosen the soil first, then apply the topsoil, and then have the landscaper return to mix the 2 soils together. Once you have done a final raking of the soil, if it rains, you do not have to re-rake it again, except to repair a washout.

### Starter Fertilizer.

It is important to provide the grass plants with the nutrition they need to grow new roots, and a starter fertilizer is a great way to do just that. For instance, you can pick up starter fertilizer from us, or we can deliver it along with your sod order. You would apply our 12-12-12 fertilizer at a rate of 8 pounds per 1,000 square feet on the soil **before you put the sod down.** (50 lb bag = 6,250sq. ft) Coverage. Learn more by giving us a call or visiting [www.redhenturf.com](http://www.redhenturf.com).

### The Value Of Friendship.

As a rule, one person can lay about 500 square feet of sod per hour. Each roll weigh about 35 pounds each, so there is no such thing as too much help. In round numbers, laying sod with the help of friends will save you about \$1.50 per roll (not including any cost for preparation) versus hiring a professional to lay the sod.

### How Long Can The Sod Stay Rolled Up?

Sod is a living plant, so the earlier you can transplant it, the better. With cooler temperatures in the spring, it can last 3 or 4 days rolled up. In the summer, it needs to be unrolled and installed the same day you get it. Weather can be unpredictable, so once you confirm your order and the sod is harvested, it is yours. Rain delays can stress both you and your sod, something else to take into account as you decide to lay sod yourself or have it done. No matter the season, if you get rained out or have to quit for a while, *do not cover* the sod ... let it breathe or you run the risk of heat building up and "cooking" your sod.

### Considerations When Patching Sod.

There are two ways to patch an area. One way is to trim the sod to fit the spot. The second way is to enlarge the spot to fit the rolls of sod, which also makes straight lines. We think that the second way looks better, and makes it easier to prepare the soil.

### INSTALLING & PATCHING SOD

1. After your soil is loosened 2-3 inches and leveled out (see above), the next step is to pick up sticks and rocks bigger than 2 inches. Press the smaller rocks into the soil. You do not need to remove bits of old grass or weeds that are smaller than a tennis ball. If you have a lot of dirt clods, spread them out evenly because they will melt when you water.
2. Make the soil 1 ½ inch lower next to driveways and sidewalks so water will drain onto the lawn. Make the soil ½ inch lower than the neighbors' existing grass so the sod will be about the same height. Sprinkler heads should stick up about ½ inch.
3. Apply 12-12-12 starter fertilizer at a rate of 8 pounds per 1000 square feet, and lightly rake it into the soil.
4. Pick the best place to start unrolling the sod that minimizes the amount you might have to carry. For example, if you will be sodding your entire lawn, start in the back and work to the front. If you are sodding part of your lawn, start in the front and work to the back until you run out of sod.

5. Start by unrolling the sod to make a straight line. For the next row, place a roll so it will unroll in the right direction a couple of inches away from the previous roll. Unroll it and slide the sod together. Do not overlap or leave gaps. Stagger the ends to avoid long seams. On steep hills, lay the sod sideways across the hill rather than up and down.

6. Do not roll the sod because rolling will compact the soil and make new root growth difficult. Outside edges of sod that do not butt up to anything should have a little soil raked up to the exposed edge to keep the edge from drying out.

7. First Day Watering - The sod should be soaked with water as soon as it is laid. Begin watering when you can do so without making a muddy mess in the areas yet to be sodded. Water each zone or section as soon as it is laid. Check by walking on it. If you make deep footprints, it has enough water. If the soil is firm, lift a corner of the sod to inspect. The soil on the back of the sod should be damp to wet. If it's not damp, water for at least 30 more minutes.

### More Helpful Tips for Installing and Patching.

- If the temperature is above 85° and the soil is dry, wet the soil about 24 hours ahead of time, enough so that when you lay the sod, the soil is still slightly damp. Dampened soil is cooler and the turf will root faster.
- Have more questions? - (1) Search for Red Hen Turf on YouTube for our videos on removing our old lawn, measuring, and more. (2) Read our "Early and Long Term Sod Care Instructions," which you should have received with your sod and is also available on our website. (3) NEVER hesitate to give us a call!

### Seeding to Supplement Sod.

Doing a Grass Seeding at the time of year when Mother Nature is playing along the nicest makes all the difference. August 15-September 15 is TYPICALLY the most ideal time in our regional area. Red Hen can help you with your plans for seeding, AND we sell the seed blends that match our most current varieties of Kentucky Bluegrass and Rhizomatous Tall Fescue (RTF) Sod.

### Guarantee.

Red Hen Sod is guaranteed to be in good growing condition at the time of sale; after that, **it is your responsibility.** If the sod is not watered properly, it will not grow. **Call us immediately** at the time of sale if the sod is anything but healthy, and we will give the matter our prompt attention. **You must call within first 24 hours, if there are any issues with the sod.**



Red Hen Turf  
Carries  
Sod  
Seed  
Fertilizer &  
Erosion Products