

STEPS FOR TURF INSTALLATION

1.) ROUGH GRADING

A landscape plan should be started by this time. It should be drawn to scale with turf areas located. Soil compacted from construction equipment must be broken up for drainage and proper root growth. A tractor is best for this, but a rototiller will work. Any grade changes or drainage problems should be taken care of at this time. Determine whether any run-off will be coming onto the property and where it will go. A slope of 2 to 3 percent is best (1' per 100' is 1 percent). Landowners are responsible for run-off from their property. Most situations can be handled with common sense and hardware available from local suppliers. This is an especially important step as standing water and erosion problems are very difficult to solve once the plants are in the ground.

2.) AMENDMENTS

The first step is to determine what type of soil you have. In most areas between Santa Maria and Paso Robles, you either have very sandy soil or some form of clay with varying rock content. The same quantities of amendments would be used for both types of soil with the exception that gypsum should be added to heavy clay soils to give it better structure. Organic matter in the form of wood shavings and manure are generally used in these areas. Layer 2-4 inches of plantar mix over broken up existing soil.

3.) CONSTRUCTION

Now is the time to get all underground lines and most hardscape installed. Electrical and gas lines should be installed first since they run the deepest. Be sure to follow local codes and have only qualified people do the job. Next, install the water lines 12 to 18 inches deep for pressure and 12 inches for sprinkler lines. Wires for irrigation controllers should be placed in the trench also. Refill the trenches and settle the soil with water and pack down. Concrete and major woodwork should be installed to establish grades. Next, all header boards should be installed, and finish grading started. After grading, flush irrigation lines, Test the sprinkler system for coverage and leaks. An automatic controller is an efficient water and time saver and should be considered.

4.) TURF SELECTION

Sod has many advantages over seeding and when a price is placed on one's time, a hit-and-miss seed installation can become more costly. There are times when sod should be used: when the slope is too steep; during colder months; to smother out a weed problem; or when a wedding or home sale prompts fast reliable results. Cool season grasses are usually used in our area. Turf Type Tall Fescue are most frequently used. Cuesta highland is a blend that is good in heat, drought, shade, and heavy use. BONSAI is a fescue with a finer leaf. Good for homeowner decorative needs and requires only half the mowing.

5.) TURF CARE

With soil amended properly and a well-planned irrigation system, only three basic rules need to be followed: timely watering; periodic fertilization; and mowing. Turf needs approximately 1 inch of water per week, whether from rain or irrigation. Watering should be done before 9am. When a lawn becomes blue gray in color it is under water stress. Fertilization every 4-6 weeks to maintain color and constant growth. A well-fed turf will stay thick and out-compete most weeds. A balanced fertilizer with trace elements is best. Lawns must be mowed regularly and never remove more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the leaf blade at each mowing. Cool-season grasses are cut at 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and a little lower during the winter. It is the regular mowing with a sharp mower that gives a well-groomed appearance. Please feel free to call upon our 39 years of landscape experience for advice.