



## Newly laid turf

Newly laid turf needs water to survive for the first 28 days after it is put down; but if it is raining anyway, there is no need for extra water.

If it is dry then you should water to keep it damp: but see our 10 tips below to see how you can minimise wastage. After 28 days, the lawn will be established and will be able to survive without further watering.

### Watering a newly laid lawn – 10 tips

- When you prepare the ground for turfing, use a soil conditioner to increase the soil's ability to retain moisture.
- Plan ahead to prevent the turf drying out: don't have more turf delivered in a day than you can lay.
- Finish your ground preparation well before the turf delivery. This way, you will be able to start laying the turf as soon as it has arrived. The quicker you lay the turf, the less chance it has of drying out.
- When your turf is delivered, stack it in a shady place.
- Dampen the ground immediately before laying.
- Tamp the turf down lightly as you lay it, to ensure good contact with the soil underneath.
- When you have finished turfing, water straight away. The first watering should ensure that the soil is damp to a depth of 100mm. Aim to keep the turf, and the soil under it, damp – you can check this by turning up a corner of the turf.
- In the days following, water only in the early morning or in the early evening, so the sun doesn't burn off the water you've added
- It's important not to over-water your turf. Over-watering will create boggy conditions – and promote grass diseases.
- Water less and less frequently over the next 28 days. The turf should never be allowed to dry out and go brown in this period.

## Established lawns – wait before you water

(the above picture shows an established lawn showing the first signs of drought stress)

There is no need to water your established lawn

The watering of established lawns is not only unnecessary, it also causes many of the common lawn problems. Watering your established lawn should be avoided in most situations. Here's why:

- Water is a precious, limited resource;
- Watering increases the chance of disease on your lawn. Most lawn diseases thrive in warm, damp conditions;
- Watering encourages the spread of weed grass and annual meadow grass: lawns that are allowed to dry out have much less of these unsightly weeds.
- Watering encourages shallow rooting, which in turn means the lawn is more at risk in dry conditions. So once you start watering, you can't stop.
- Damp soils are easily damaged during heavy use, for example during family barbecues and games on the lawn.

**Essentially, grass is a natural survivor; it may go brown during a drought but in most cases it will recover when it rains.**

Maintaining the lawn during hot, dry weather

- Increase mowing height to 35-40 mm – this creates deeper roots and more shade and shelter from higher temperatures;
- Try not to concentrate wear in one place – move barbecues and toys like slides and swings around;
- No need to feed as the grass will not be growing during a drought;
- Avoid blanket weedkillers as these may damage the grass – use a spot weedkiller if necessary;
- Keep mower blades sharp as blunt blades bruise the grass leaf and they lose more water;
- Apply a light dressing of compost to help keep moisture in the soil and protect the grass from higher temperatures;
- Scarify your lawn once a year to remove matted and dead growth from the lawn – if allowed to build up, this acts as a barrier to rainfall.