



**Nothing will give you  
a new lawn faster than  
freshly cut SOD.**

**You can be enjoying  
the look of a new  
lawn after just one  
weekend !**



**Skip Batchelder**





## About The Author

Through my many years, I have perfected my gardening skills and expanded my knowledge and experience as a gardening instructor, speaker, author, certified nursery consultant, and most recently blogger.

I was introduced to gardening at the very early age of 8. I lived across the street from a man who gardened his little slice of heaven on about 5 acres of semi-rural property in No. California. Mr. May had everything from honeybees to an orchard, and was very accommodating to the little boy from across the street. I spent hours shadowing Mr. May around his place, asking questions, making mental notes and scurrying across the street to try my hand in my parent's anemic yard. Eventually I got so good at applying Mr. May's know-how that I won the consent of my Mother to tend her flower beds; and my Dad gave me a vegetable garden plot in the corner of our backyard. I didn't know then that I was attracted to the science of the whole thing, but I could see the results and was very proud of the increase in blooms for my Mom, and the vegetable production that even I could appreciate as abundant. I was hooked.

High school and college left little time or opportunity to get in the dirt. But, I was rewarded and further encouraged by my zoology and botany classes and next tried my hand at tending a garden underneath the high porch and stairs of our apartment in No. New Jersey. It all came back to me and when we finally had our first home I had my first garden plot as an adult. Some early setbacks and a hankering to be more at-one with the earth, led me to the disciplines and sacrifices of French Bio-Intensive Organic Gardening. Yeah, I wore wing tips to work, but I had Berkenstocks in my heart as a young man in the late 70s.

Today, I live on a "rock" in Rocklin, CA and my active gardening is restricted to raised beds ( even my lawn is a raised bed ) and patio containers. But, I do keep up with the latest trends in gardening, the irreversible encroachment of the Government on our garden culture; and most importantly, those new to the pleasures of gardening. As a nursery consultant in the Garden Center of the world's leading home improvement store chain, I have even gained a faithful following of young adults with first home responsibilities and opportunities: and retired men and women who now have the time, focus, and inclination to finally develop a better understanding of gardening and hopes for its rewards.

Sod  
Lawn



**Skip Batchelder**



# Lawns

## New Lawn From SOD

Want your lawn to look fresh, healthy and established in as little as one weekend ? Then SOD is your first choice for a new or replaced lawn.

The overall cost of a SOD lawn is appreciably greater than a SEEDED lawn of the same size - but, there is almost instant satisfaction from the results of your effort, or investment in a professional installer.

Here are the steps you can anticipate for this lawn solution.

### Remove Old Lawn

Remove the sod layer of your old lawn by hand, which is difficult and messy; or by using a Powered Sod Cutter. Try to cut just below the netting of the old sod. You need to get this netting out of the lawn before you till the soil ! Otherwise, you will be constantly picking tangled netting out of your tiller's tines. The sod should come off in manageable pieces for disposal in your county landfill. A borrowed, or rented, truck or trailer will be very handy on this day.



### Install, Repair, or Tune Irrigation

Now is the time to examine your existing irrigation system and detect any part of the system that is not operating at full efficiency. Be sure to check your timer, valves, pipes, risers and sprinkler heads for uninhibited operation, leaks and adequate coverage in the areas to be irrigated by your system - for each lawn area.



### Prep The Soil

Till and rake soil, adding in as much organic soil amendment ( 50/50\* mix is ideal ) as you can afford, and have time to incorporate into your soil bed. Rake soil, removing any rocks or debris, being careful to eliminate any depressions, ensuring a well drained lawn. After rolling the entire area, test in-ground sprinklers to be certain there will be NO missed spots where sod can dry out.

*\* 50/50 is a mix of compost and topsoil available in bulk from a local landscape supplier.*



# Lawn

## New Lawn From SOD (Continued)

### Roll The Sod After Laying

A final rolling of the installed Sod is a key ( and too often ignored ) step in the installation of a Sod Lawn. This gentle rolling of the Sod helps to ensure that the Sod is laying completely flat against the soil contour and helps to push the seams together more tightly. Better contact prevents the development of fungus at the roots. Tighter seams means less opportunity for the establishment of weed seeds in loose or open



### Water Thoroughly, and Often

Begin watering as soon as the Sodding is complete. This is not just a spritz ! You must ensure that the water penetrates the sod to moisten the area between the sod and the soil to induce the development of roots, and their penetration into the soil, and release of the starter fertilizer. If you see water flowing from beneath your Sod then it's possible you are over watering. Cut back the time set in your sprinkler schedule. Never let new Sod dry out. Be especially careful to check any exposed edges.



### Wait Awhile To Mow New Sod

Don't be in a hurry to mow your new Sod Lawn. It has been working very hard to extend it's root system into fertile soil base you prepared. Give it time to set root in the soil. You can tell when the roots have been established. First, you will observe the blades extending themselves as new growth, and when you grab a handful of these blades and tug on them - the Sod resists.



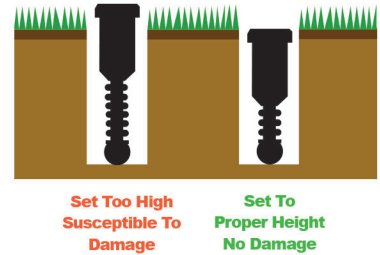
So you're ready to mow ! OK, but don't cut too much. Remember it is the GREEN part of the blades that produce the sugars for the roots.

Again apply our **1/3 Rule** - Don't cut off more than 1/3 of the blades in any mowing. For a really healthy, happy lawn set the wheel height on your mower as high as possible.

SOD is the closest thing  
to an “ Instant Lawn” !

### Sprinkler Head Elevations

Soil should be raked and rolled so the top of the sprinkler when it is OFF is even with the soil portion of the SOD. If set to high, damage is sure to occur when repeatedly hit by the wheels of a lawn mower. Height can be easily adjust by installing adjustable risers when installing or reinstalling a sprinkler head of any kind.



SOD  
LAWNS

### Spread The Fertilizer and Roll Soil

Using a mechanical spreader, evenly distribute a **STARTER Fertilizer** following package directions. The higher phosphorous ( middle # ) will help to promote healthy new root growth. After fertilizing, ROLL the soil one more time to prepare a smooth, even and compacted soil conducive to good Sod adhesion. Both these steps are critical to encouraging rapid root development. Finally, just before laying the Sod, use a hose and nozzle to moisten the soil. Never lay sod on dry soil. Give the line of soil you are laying a light spray of water just before you lay that row of sod. Just enough so as to not erode any of your soil preparations.



### Lay The Sod

Lay Sod beginning in a corner. Using a board as a straight edge and a sharp knife, trim just enough off each end of the roll to give you a clean, flat, straight edge. Start with a full roll, repeating until the first row is complete. Return to the corner and begin the next row with 1/2 length of Sod, followed by a full length. Repeating the pattern will “erase ” the lines visible before your Sod fully knits. It is vitally important that all seams between Sod lengths and anywhere one piece of sod makes contact with another piece of Sod are - - **TIGHT WITH NO GAPS.**



**TIP:** When your sod is delivered, or unloaded, keep it stacked and covered with a damp bed sheet, cloth drop cloth or burlap tarp. Keeping this covering damp will do wonders to keep your sod fresh - especially if left in the sun, or on a windy day ! Because the roots are exposed and vulnerable, *never let sod rolls dry out !*

# Lawns

## Purchasing Sod

SOD is available by the roll from **The Home Depot**.

### SOD SPECIFICATIONS

Turf Grass is 95/5% Mix: No. California \*\* ( 95 Dwarf Fescue 5 Kentucky Blue Grass ) This Fescue/Blue blend is selected for its resilience to heavy traffic/play, and its drought tolerance when established.

2020 Season Cost, Approx \$7.00 per roll.

Each ROLL is 24" x 48" Covering 8 sq. ft.

60 Rolls per Pallet ( totaling 480 sq. ft. )

### PURCHASING AT STORE

You can purchase a single roll of SOD. SOD is increasing available at Home Depot for purchase pick-up. However it should be noted that its **FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE** at the Store.

### SPECIAL ORDER AT STORE

SOD can be ordered at the Home Depot.

Minimum order is one pallet ( 60 rolls, 480 sq. ft. ) Minimum orders will have a delivery charge based on distance to your site from Store.

1,000 sq. ft., or more, **DELIVERED FREE** to home or job site.

### Park Avenue Turf - Grower Direct

- **\*\* Recommend for Long Hot Summers**
- **Tips for Calculating Your Sod Order**
- **Pro Installation - FREE Estimate**
- **Install Video**
- **Delivery Direct**

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



**CAUTION** If sod has to sit on site for anything longer than about an hour, spray it down and cover with an old bed sheet or burlap sheet.

**DO NOT COVER WITH PLASTIC SHEETING !!**



**Skip's Tips**  
For A  
**GREENER THUMB**

# Bulk Soil Amendment

The best **BULK** amendment for planting an entire new lawn from seed or sod is

**BULK 50/50 MIX**

This mixture, tilled into your soil, will offer an very nice bed in which the roots of the grass plants can get firmly established.

50/50 mix is available in bulk from these two local providers for pick up, or local delivery (fee).



**(916) 652 - 7209**

**Sierra College Blvd at Taylor Road  
Loomis, California**



**(916) 772 - 7900**

**700 Berry St  
Roseville, California**

If bulk soils are not convenient you can use either of these

**Bagged Lawn Soils**

This mixture, turned into your soil will also offer an very nice bed in which the roots of the grass plants can get firmly established.

Don't be afraid to purchase extra bags. Any unopened bags are returnable to the origin of purchase.

**Skip's  
Pick**



**KELLOGG TOPPER**  
2 cu ft Bag



**SCOTTS LAWN SOIL**  
1.5 cu ft Bag





## Skip's Tips For A GREENER THUMB

# Specialty Fertilizer

Of all the that are sometimes forgot in laying SOD, the application of a **STARTER FERTILIZER** is perhaps the most detrimental to starting your new SOD Lawn. You can't rely on the Scott's TURF BUILDER Lawn Fertilizer as your Starter Fertilizer because the State of California has legislated PHOSPHOROUS out of the formula. When that little grass plant as emerged from the seed husk, it has used up all the nutrient it carried with it to germination. That new root will immediately be looking for a vital source of **PHOSPHOROUS** needed for root development. The Garden Guy recommends you apply **Scott's Starter Fertilizer** to the prepared area just before you begin laying the sod.



**BONUS TIP** If, after you apply the Starter Fertilizer under your new sod, you have any left over - save this for a late feeding in the Fall. Roots do most of their developing in the cool months of the year !





## Too Little. Too Often !

Of all the Lawn Care factors, water irrigation is likely THE most misunderstood subject. The primary confusion comes in the belief that it is best to water often. Here in lies the problem - if you water every day for a few minutes - say 5 minutes per sprinkler zone - you will have watered "short". The result, the roots of your grass plants ( and that is what a lawn is made up of, thousands of individual grass plants ) will grow only as deep as your soil is saturated. Remember, ROOTS are the key to any plant's success. Conversely, if you were to change to a pattern of infrequent watering, even every other day and setting the zone timers to say 10 minutes, you would get deeper soil saturation and deeper root penetration. The result: a stronger, healthier and happier lawn.

## Missing In Action !

The second most frequent contributor to poor irrigation is an in-ground irrigation system that is out of tune, or just plain not working properly, if at all. Your irrigation system, and the patterns it established, should have been designed to deliver complete coverage from day one. However, the use and abuse of your yard can have pattern changing effects on sprinkler heads and values. A sprinkler head repeatedly hit by your mower could be out of alignment by as much as 180°. A low voltage wire yanked from control valve can leave an entire zone inoperable and not delivering water to its assigned location every time the system goes through its cycle. The result, brown patches of dead or dying grass of various sizes. The lesson here is obvious, you should examine your irrigation system at least once a month ( especially during the hotter months of July, August, and September ) by manually dialing through the cycles with enough time to observe and note the performance of each zone and sprinkler head to be sure they are working properly.

# Lawns

## It's All About Blades and Cutting !

Most people think that mowing their lawn is a chore. Well it is. But, it is one chore that if performed properly each time can have positive effects on the health and well being of your New SOD Lawn.

First, try to cut your lawn at the highest wheel setting possible on your mower. Remember, it is the green part of the grass blades that makes the sugars that are stored in the roots. The more *photosynthesis* taking place in the longer blades, the more food being stored in the roots, the happier the grass. In addition, the longer grass blades offer more shade for the base of the grass plants to conserve moisture between scheduled irrigation.

Ever wonder why your neighbor's grass looks so healthy and well kept ? It's likely he sharpens, or has sharpened the blade(s) on his mower !

If you don't perform any other maintenance on your lawn mower, please take the time to sharpen the blade. A dull mower blade does not CUT the grass - it TEARS the ends of the blades - repeatedly. So every week you have induced fresh damage to the grass blades and made their torn ends an easy entrance for diseases and fungal infections which at the least make the appearance of your lawn sickly . . . and, at the worst, kill hundreds of grass plants in your lawn. If you want to be serious about this easy to do preventative measure

1) learn how to safely remove the blade from your mower ( from a PDF showing how to sharpen - including removal of the spark plug wire from the spark plug ) and 2) invest in a second back up blade that you can keep sharp and ready for action when you feel the need for a cleaner, sharper cut.

Finally, always mow in the opposite direction and reverse pattern from the time before. This avoids giving your lawn a patterned look of wheel tracks and cutting angles.

## Mowing



# Rentals To The Rescue

Renting the right tool from a Rental Center can save time, energy . . . and your Back !!  
I have long been a fan of the helpful Rental Associates at my Home Depot.

## SOD CUTTER

To easily remove existing lawn turf, I highly recommend renting a gas powered Sod Cutter. This nifty machine makes fast work of slicing old turf lawns ( and old netting ), and weeds, off at the roots for easy pick up and disposal.



## TILLER

You can't beat a gas powered, rear tine, roto-type tiller for digging up hard packed soil. It is also very convenient for mixing amendments into your soil prior to planting.



## TRENCHER

Nothing makes the laying of irrigation pipe easier than renting a gas powered Trenching Machine. Typically this is done after tilling your soil, so as to NOT disturb your trench with the tiller. Select a Trencher that has power to the wheels to allow it's easy movement to the project, and alignment with the trench.



## AERATOR

The most important tool for the rejuvenation of any lawn not needing to be replanted or Sodded. Aeration is the perfect companion to any OVERSEEDING project.



## ROLLER

If you rent nothing else you should rent a Lawn Rollers. There is no substitute for gently compacting prepared soil for seeding, snugging down sod, or smoothing out overseed top cover. 1/2 filled with water is sufficient for any project.



**TOOL RENTAL**  
Center at Stanford Ranch

916-787-2410 Direct

**FREE**  
Operational Instruction  
With Every Rental.

4 hour and 24 hour rentals are available. Transport in a trailer or truck is necessary.  
All towable rental tools, and rental trailers, require a 2" hitch ball.

# Wishing You Every Success

I hope you have found this  
**Quick Guide To New Lawn From Sod**  
valuable and inspiring.

Gardening is just one of the interests enjoyed by my league of faithful followers who have shared many of my experiences through one of my personally authored publications:

WEBSITE [skipsoutdoorliving.com](http://skipsoutdoorliving.com)

BLOG [skipsoutdoorliving.com/blog](http://skipsoutdoorliving.com/blog)

RESOURCES [skipsoutdoorliving.com/resources](http://skipsoutdoorliving.com/resources)



***Better Gardening With Every Visit !***

is divided into these main areas of interest

**Yard and Garden  
Outdoor Cooking  
Patio Living**



**Skip Batchelder**

