



**Maintain your turf**  
**Warm Season Grasses**  
**Winter care & general maintenance**

**Drought beating tips**

**Sand Top-dressing**

Warm Seasons Grasses will benefit from a top-dressing of washed sand, typically 1m<sup>3</sup> per 100m<sup>2</sup>. The sand will fill in any voids around the runners and it will “bed” the turf in on site. Top-dressing will promote growth in runners and roots after installation.

**Kikuyu and Couch over sown with Ryegrass will not require top-dressing.**

**Watering**

After installation keep your lawn moist at all times until fine white roots start to develop underneath (establishment 2-4 weeks).

After establishment introduce deep watering as required to promote a deep vigorous root system (10mm per application)

**Weekly Watering Guide:**

Dec-Feb	Twice per week
Mar	Once per week
Apr-Sept	0 per week
Oct-Nov	Once per week

Beware of water repellent soils. Sand to sandy clay loam soils with high humus content can develop a problem known as water repellence. If severe, this will prevent moisture from entering the root zone. This results from sand grains becoming coated with organic residues and is exacerbated by dry weather. The problem is readily detected as drops of water stay on (rather than soak into) the soil surface, leaving the soil below dry. If a droplet remains on the soil surface for 10-60 seconds, the soil has moderate water repellence, but above 60 seconds the problem is severe. The challenge with water repellent soils is to enable them to wet up more readily. Proprietary soil wetters, designed for lawns can be effective in managing this problem.



**If you have installed a Warm Seasons Grass lawn, we recommend the following care and maintenance:**

**Fertiliser**

Warm Seasons Grasses need to be fed to remain strong and healthy. The quantity and frequency of feeding needs to have regard to the plants growth and dormancy periods. A complete lawn fertilizer (NPK 16:8:9) should be applied every 4-6 weeks throughout the growing season, commencing early September. Label rate is 25g per square metre. In early April, apply a fertilizer with higher potassium (NPK 5:10:25) to stimulate root growth and to “winterize” the grass during its dormant season. Label rate is 25g per square metre.

**Mowing**

Mowing frequency and height are the two most important aspects of turf maintenance. A good rule of thumb is to cut often enough so that no more than 30% of the leaf is removed at each mowing. Removing more than 30% will impede the grass’s ability to photosynthesize and stunt its growth for several days. Frequent mowing will also promote root development and the proper storage of carbohydrates in the plant. It is recommended that the mowing height be reduced early in the growing season (during October) to remove organic build up and encourage density in the Warm Seasons Grass. At other times of the year grass clippings do not need to be removed. To do so would remove 50kg – 60kg of nitrogen from the soil (one quarter of the turf’s annual nitrogen).

**The mowing height should also be raised 30-50% in shaded areas to compensate for weak, spindly growth.**

Varieties	Mowing Height Oct-Mar	Mowing Height Apr-May	Mowing frequency Oct-Mar	Mowing frequency April-May
Couch	25mm	35mm	Every 5-7 days	Monthly
Kikuyu	50mm	70mm	Every 5-7 days	Monthly
Soft Leaf Buffalo	50mm	70mm	Every 5-7 days	Monthly

**Weeds**

The best method of weed prevention is proper turf maintenance. Weed seeds germinate quickly in bare soil; a thick, healthy turf will decrease the chances of weed seeds establishing themselves in your lawn. If practical, weeds are best removed by hand prior to the development of a seed head. A selective weed spray may also be used to remove weeds but care must be taken in its application; i.e. technique, rate and timing. Generally Warm Seasons Grasses are susceptible to most weed sprays hence it is important to carefully identify the weed and select the correct spray. Immature weeds are best sprayed in the winter (during Warm Seasons Grass dormancy) or in the summer (during Warm Seasons Grass activity) when drought stress can also be used to weaken cool seasons weeds. Warning broadleaf chemical sprays containing Dicamba must not be used on Soft Leaf Buffalo. If weeds persist contact your local nursery.

**Soil Compaction**

Aeration of the soil is critical. The health and vigour of the root zone is a primary determinant of the turf’s health and vigour above-ground. Aeration will restore oxygen supplies to roots and rhizomes (underground runners). Unlike above-ground growth, roots and rhizomes are incapable of producing their own oxygen. Vital oxygen supplies are normally sourced from pores in the soil and other spaces such as worm holes and decayed root channels. Aeration will also improve the penetration of water in to the profile. Where water logging is likely surface or sub-surface drainage should be installed.