

## **Lawn: Establishment and maintenance**

A lawn is an area where grass is grown as a green carpet for a landscape and is the basic feature of any garden. It serves to enhance the beauty of the garden, be it larger or smaller. Proper lawn maintenance plays a crucial part in any landscape design. A beautiful well maintained lawn can make the entire landscape look good, whereas a lawn that is not maintained can completely ruin its beauty. The lawn not only harmonizes with a decor of the drawing room, but also sets of a suitable background for a specimen tree or a shrub, as well as for colourful beds and borders. The position of the lawn largely depends upon the layout of the garden in relation to the house. In general lawn should be wide open with access to direct sunshine, especially in front of a rockery and a water pool.

### **Site**

The preparation of site includes digging, leveling and enriching the soil with organic manures or by amending with fertile soil. If the soil is very heavy, coarse sand may be added by removing subsoil to a depth of 20 cm. The ideal soil pH should be 5.0 to 5.6. If it is very acidic 500 g/m<sup>2</sup> lime should be added and to clayey loam or alkaline soil gypsum of the same quantity may be added. Provision of drainage for excess rain water should be made if the ground is not sloppy.

### **Levelling**

The site should be thoroughly levelled with spade, pebbles and weeds are hand picked. The soil is rolled with a roller. Weeds especially nut grass should not be allowed to grow and should be removed with roots for at least 2 to 3 times.

### **Methods of lawn making**

**Seeding:** The most popular grass suitable for seeding is "Doob" grass (*Cynodondactylon*). It has the fast spreading mat forming habit, radially forms roots at the nodes, the foliage is dark green, narrow with parallel veins. A lawn from seed is thought of only when grass roots are not available. About 30 kg of seed is required for planting one hectare. The soil should be reduced to fine tilth and given a light rolling. The site should be divided into suitable small squares or rectangles, the seeds are mixed with double the quantity of finely sieved soil and should be rolled again and watered liberally with rose can. The seeds take four to five weeks for germination. Care should be taken not to flood the site. For the first few times, the grasses are cut with a scythe. Lawn mower may be used for easy maintenance and for its spreading.

**Turfing:** The turfs are nothing but pieces of earth with compact grasses on them. These turfs should be cut uniformly in squares from a place where the grass is short, compact and free from weeds. These turfs should be placed on the prepared ground site, side by side and beaten down flat with a turf beater. The cavities in between

should be filled with fine soil. The entire turfed area should be rolled and watered liberally. This is the most expensive way of lawn making.

**Turfplastering:** The doob grass can be procured in large quantities free from weeds and chopped properly into small bits of 5-7 cm long. Two baskets of chopped grass pieces should be mixed well with one basket each of garden soil and fresh cow dung and a shovel full of wood ash with required quantity of water to form a thick pasty substance. This mixture is then spread uniformly on the surface of a previously wetted perfectly leveled ground to a thickness of at least 2.5cm and watering should be done with a rose can. The next day, ground should be rolled and the grass should be allowed to spread. The grass will shoot up in a fortnight. To start with, cut with a scythe and after three months, use the lawn mower.

**Dibbling :** This is the cheapest but time consuming method. Small pieces of grass roots should be dibbled 10 – 15 cm apart in a leveled ground when it is wet after rain. The roots spread and grow underground in the course of six months making a fairly compact lawn by frequent mowing, rolling and watering.

**Plants suitable for planting in lawns as single specimen:** *Amherstia nobilis*, *Callistemon lanceolatus*, *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Cupresses macrocarpa*, *Pinus longifolia*, *Thuja orientalis*, *Araucaria excels*

**Shrubs and creepers:** *Agave Americana*, *Furcraea gigantean*, *Musa superba*, *Bougainvillea spectabilis*, *Cestrum nocturnum*, *Dombeya spectabilis*, *Hibiscus species*

### ***Grasses suitable for planting lawns***



***Cynodon dactylon***

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Control</b>
Chlorosis	Grass turns yellow with the deficiency of magnesium and iron	Iron: Spray Ferrous sulphate 25 g dissolved in 10 litres of water per 100 sq. metre.



***Zoysia japonica***

**Problems in Lawn planting**

		Magnesium: Spray Magnesium sulphate 100 g in 10 litres of water per 100 sq. metre.
Dog urine	Dead grass in the lawn	Re-plant grass in a circular manner
Fertilizer burn	Grass browns especially in hot weather	Drench the lawn in injured areas to leach excess fertilizers deep into the soil.
Improper mowing	Lawns cut too closely turn yellowish and often look diseased or dried	Mow enough to remove not more than 1/3rd height of the grass at a time. Keep mower blades sharp.
Improper watering	Light sprinkling encourages shallow roots. Over watering causes diseases	Water the lawn to wet the soil about 10 to 15 cm depth.

### Plant Protection :-

Pest	Symptoms	Control
Leafhoppers	Suck the juice from grass blades causing stripped white, then yellow and finally brown leaves.	Spray Dimethoate 2 ml/l
Nematodes	Affect the roots, lawn takes a bleached out appearance	Apply Furadan 40 g /sq.m

### **Some Common Grasses used for Lawn**

Botanical Name	Common name	Texture	Situation
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Hariyali (or) Arugu (or) Doob grass	Medium fine	Suitable for open sunny location; drought resistant
<i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i>	St. Augustine grass or Buffalo grass	Coarse texture	Suitable for shady situation; requires frequent watering
<i>Sporobolus tremulus</i>	Chain grass (or) Upparugu	Fine	Suitable for saline soils and open sunny locations
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual blue grass	Medium fine	Suitable for acid soils and suitable for higher elevations
<i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i>	Kikuyu grass	Rough	Grow well in acids soils, suitable for higher elevations.
<i>Zoisia japonica</i>	Japan grass	Coarse	Suitable for poor sandy soil; open sunny situation, slow in growth
<i>Z. matrella</i>	Manila grass	Medium	Suitable for open sunny situation
<i>Z. tenuifolia</i>	Korean grass or velvet grass or carpet grass	Fine	Suitable for open sunny situation
<i>Cynodon</i> sp.	Bermuda grass (or) Hyderabad grass	Fine	Suitable for open sunny situation, needs mowing
<i>Cynodon</i> sp.	Dwarf Bermuda	Medium	Suitable for open sunny situation
<i>Festuca</i> sp.	Fescue grass	Coarse	Shade tolerant, survive on inferior soils
<i>Paspalum vaginatum</i>	Paspalum grass	Medium	Suitable for open sunny situation



