

# Installing and caring for your low maintenance lawn



This guide will help you choose the **right lawn** for your garden and show you how you can maintain a healthy, water efficient lawn.

## Turf options

Installing a warm season grass correctly helps keep your home cool and saves time on watering and maintenance. The following lawn varieties are drought tolerant and suitable for WA's warm conditions:



Soft leaf buffalo grasses

- Soft leaf - non irritant
- Disease, weed and fungus resistant
- Low allergy
- Low to medium spreading rate into garden beds
- Low maintenance level
- Moderate to good wear, recuperative, self repairing and becomes green quickly
- Requires minimum 2-4 hours direct sunlight daily

Soft leaf buffalos should ideally be mowed every 7-10 days during summer at a height of about 15-20mm and in winter every 3-5 weeks at a similar height.



Velvetene

- Soft leaf - non irritant
- Non-invasive
- Low maintenance level
- Tolerates high salt environments
- Grows in full sun or filtered shade

Velvetene should ideally be mowed every 7-14 days during summer at a height of 10-12mm. In winter mow every 21-35 days to a height of around 15-18mm.



Couch grasses

- Soft leaf - non irritant
- Low to medium spreading rate into garden beds
- Moderate maintenance required
- Excellent wear, recuperative
- Responds well to fertilisers and becomes green quickly
- Disease and pest resistant
- Requires minimum 4-5 hours direct sunlight daily

Couch grasses should ideally be mowed every 10-14 days during summer at a height of 10-12mm. In winter it should be mowed every 3-5 weeks raising the mowing height to approximately 12-16mm.



Kikuyu grasses

- Soft leaf - low irritant
- Medium maintenance due to medium to high spreading rate into garden beds
- Regular mowing is required to avoid build-up of stems or runners
- Excellent wear, recuperative and becomes green quickly
- Excellent disease and pest resistance
- Requires minimum 5-6 hours direct sunlight daily

Kikuyu grasses should ideally be mowed every 10-14 days during summer at a height of about 12-16mm. In winter mow every 3-5 weeks and raise the mowing height to around 16-20mm.



## Zoysia grasses

- Soft leaf - non irritant
- Excellent resistance to weeds, pests and diseases
- Excellent cold hardiness
- Easy weed control
- Low water usage
- Less mowing

Zoysia should ideally be mowed every 14-21 days during summer at a height of about 15-20mm and in winter mow every 3-5 weeks at a similar height.



## Queensland Blue

- Soft leaf - non irritant
- Non invasive
- Low maintenance
- Excellent resistance to weeds, pests and diseases
- Minimal thatch
- Immaculate appearance and colour
- Requires 5-6 hours of sunlight per day

Queensland Blue should ideally be mown every 10-14 days during summer at a height of 10-13mm and in winter mow every 4-5 weeks and raise the mowing height to 14-16mm. Verti mowing or scarifying in spring is recommended every 2-3 years.

## Six steps for successful planting

### 1. Clear the site

Remove any rocks, sticks or tree roots and level the area with the back of a rake or levelling board to create a smooth and consistent soil surface about 30-50mm below the level of paths and driveways.

### 2. Install irrigation

The right design will help make your irrigation system efficient, ensuring the water goes to where it is needed. A Waterwise Garden Irrigator can provide expert advice and design and install a system to ensure your new lawn will receive the right amount of water on your sprinkler roster day.

### 3. Soil preparation

Add appropriate boosters to your soil type, (for example by adding clay or red sands to your grey sands), working them into the top 15cm of soil. Add a quality soil wetting agent and a moisture retainer if possible (see your turf grower for advice) and lightly apply an organic, slow release fertiliser and water in well. This will provide a healthy base for your lawn.

Soil Type	Non-wettable (water beads on the top/runs off)	Water holding capacity	Nutrient holding capacity	Benefits from organic matter	Benefits from soil amendment (various)
Sand	Very common	Poor	Poor	Greatly	Greatly
Clay	Very rarely	Good	Medium	Greatly	A little
Loam	Rarely	Good	Medium	Greatly	A little
Gravel	Occasionally	Medium	Medium	Greatly	A little

Look for the Waterwise symbol when purchasing a gardening product at your local Waterwise Garden Centre.

### 4. Lay your turf

Begin by laying the turf along the longest straight edge, such as a driveway, pushing the edges tightly together without stretching the turf or overlapping. Stagger the joints like brickwork and use a sharp knife to cut the turf where required.

If you're installing turf on a sloped surface place the turf along the slope, not down and peg or stake the turf where required to keep it in place.

After laying the turf, use a roller to encourage soil to turf contact, lightly apply a slow release fertiliser and water thoroughly. Re-apply a light sprinkle of organic fertiliser, such as pelletised chicken manure, 14 days after laying.

### 5. Watering

Establishing a new lawn requires additional watering in the first few weeks. You can apply for an exemption to the watering roster to help with this. To find out more or to apply visit [watercorporation.com.au/exemption](http://watercorporation.com.au/exemption)

Once the exemption period finishes, you will need to revert to your watering roster.

### 6. Mowing

Lightly mow your new lawn once you are certain that the roots have taken hold. In winter, this is usually between 4 and 6 weeks.





## Maintaining a healthy lawn

To keep your lawn looking great it requires maintenance throughout the year including watering, mowing, fertilising, top dressing and de-thatching. Apply a soil wetting agent at least three times a year, at the beginning of spring, the beginning of summer and again mid to late summer. Ensure you follow the manufacturer's application and safety instructions.

### Watering days

Once your lawn is established you can only water once on your watering days, either before 9am or after 6pm. It's best to water early in the morning as it allows the water to soak to the roots and be available throughout the day when it needs it most.

You can find your watering days on our website at [watercorporation.com.au/wateringdays](http://watercorporation.com.au/wateringdays)

### Fertilising

By fertilising your lawn you're providing it with a range of nutrients for good health and growth. Apply a slow release fertiliser every two months during the warmer months and once during winter. The manufacturer's recommended fertiliser application rate is the maximum amount that should be applied. Remember that if you apply too much fertiliser, whatever your lawn doesn't use ends up in our waterways.

### Mowing

Mowing your lawn will help to keep it healthy and looking great. During summer your lawn will require more frequent mows (make sure your mower blades are sharp) every 7-21 days to a height of 10 to 20mm depending on the variety. Please refer to the individual recommended heights mentioned previously under turf options. Mowing your lawn too short will also put your lawn under extreme stress, leaving it open to disease and weed invasion. Follow the one third rule, never cut more than one-third of the height of your turf grass when mowing.

## Need a helping hand?

For more information on establishing and maintaining a healthy, warm season lawn or to find a local turf care professional or grower, visit the Turf Growers Association WA at [www.tgawa.com.au](http://www.tgawa.com.au)

For professional advice on waterwise products and services for your home and garden, visit [watercorporation.com.au/waterwise](http://watercorporation.com.au/waterwise)

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