

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SOD REMOVAL



This video will guide you through removing your grass by physically digging it out.

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This process requires tools like a shovel, spade or motorized sod cutter to cut grass into strips. The size of the project may determine whether you want to do this job yourself or hire a landscape professional.

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Sod removal removes the lawn without killing beneficial microorganisms and insects in the soil.

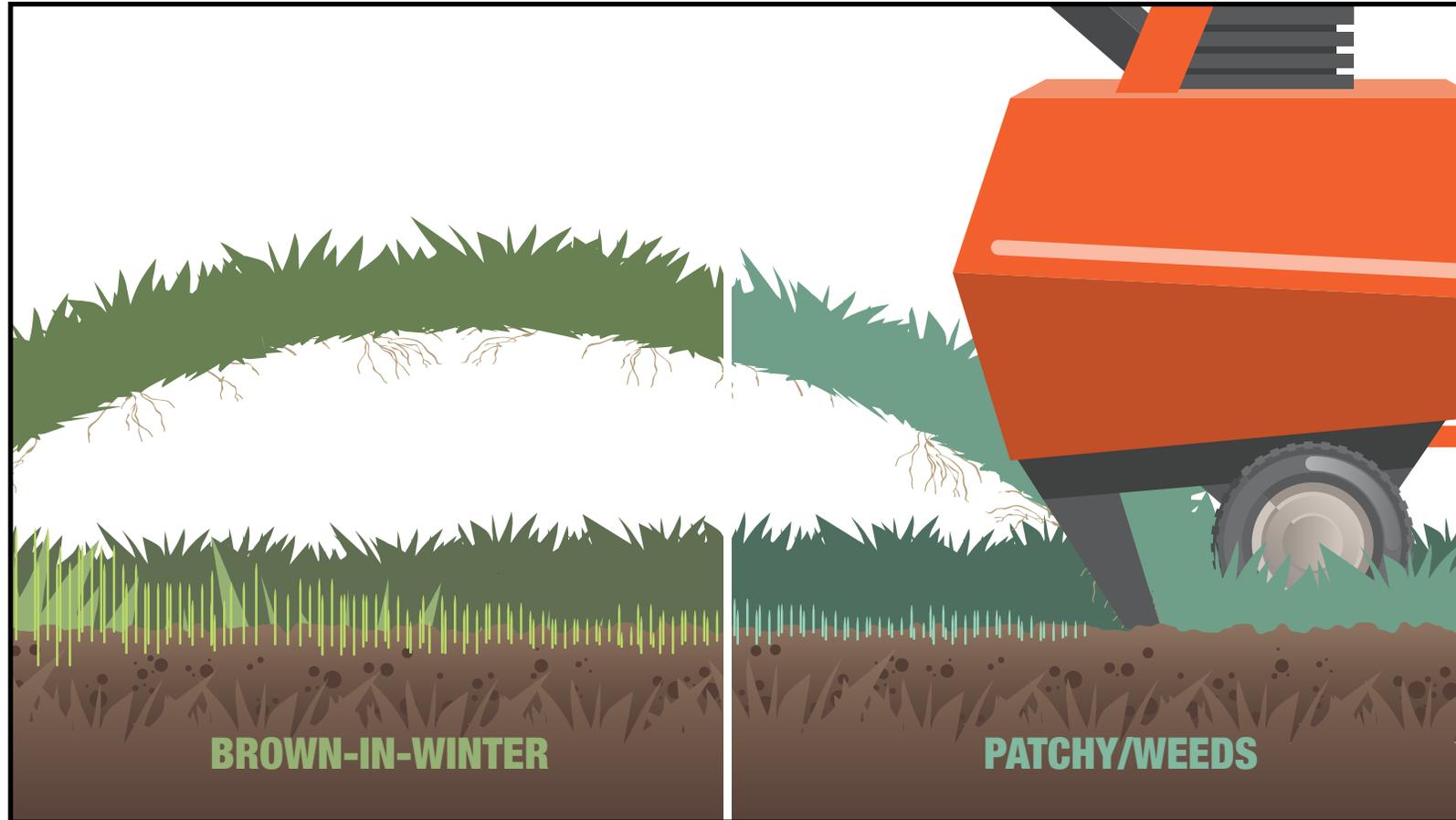
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It is the fastest way to remove lawn and can be done any time of year. Sod removed from green-in-winter, weed-free lawns can be added to a compost pile. It works best on green-in-winter lawns. Green-in-winter grasses include **Fescue** and **Bluegrass**.

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Brown-in-winter or patchy lawns are not good candidates for sod removal because they regrow from roots below the strips that are removed. Lawns with a lot of surface tree roots aren't good candidates either because shovels and sod cutters can damage roots. Perennial lawns like Bermuda grass also won't work because their roots are very deep and will simply regrow.

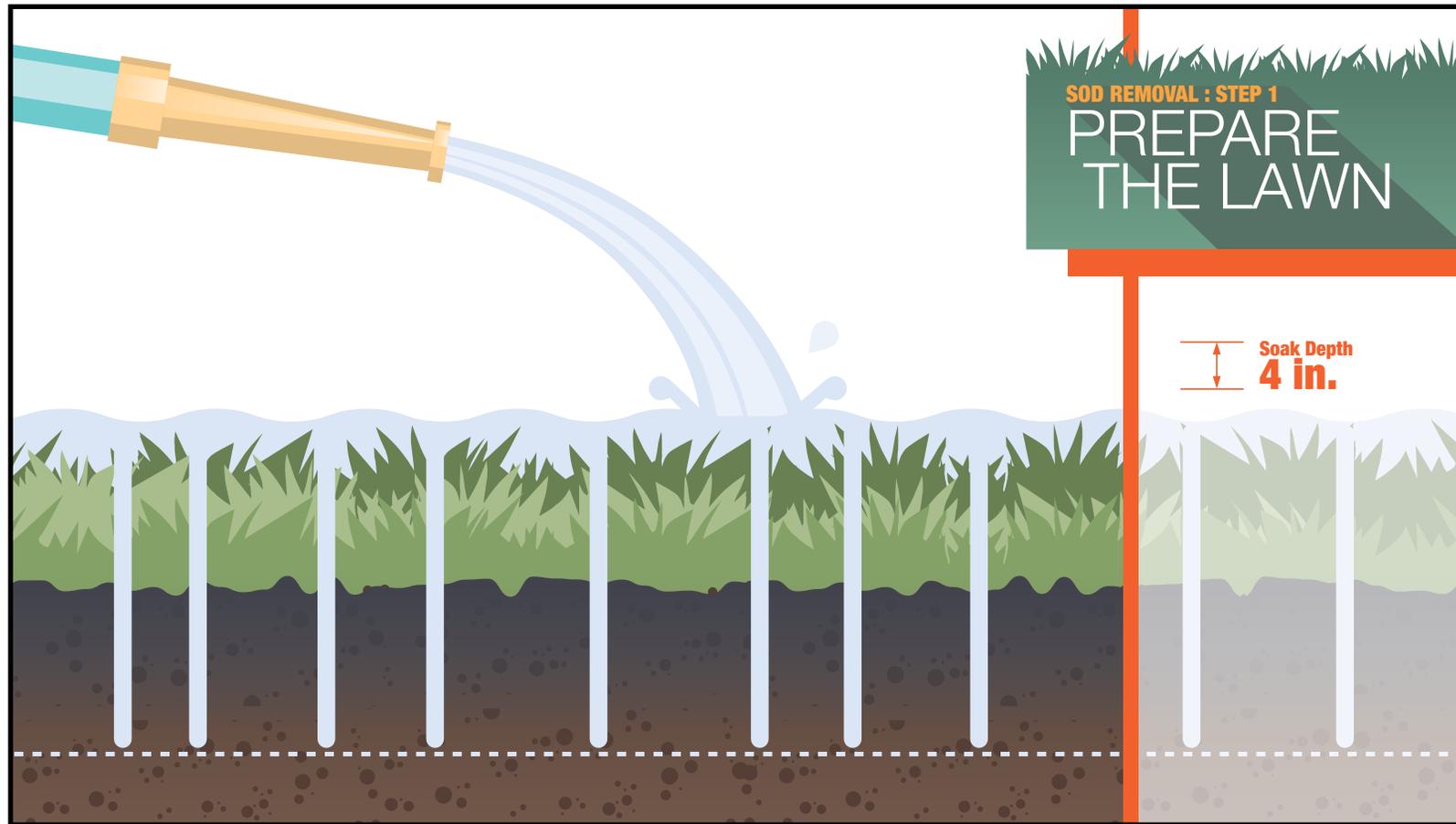
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Step one: Prepare the lawn.

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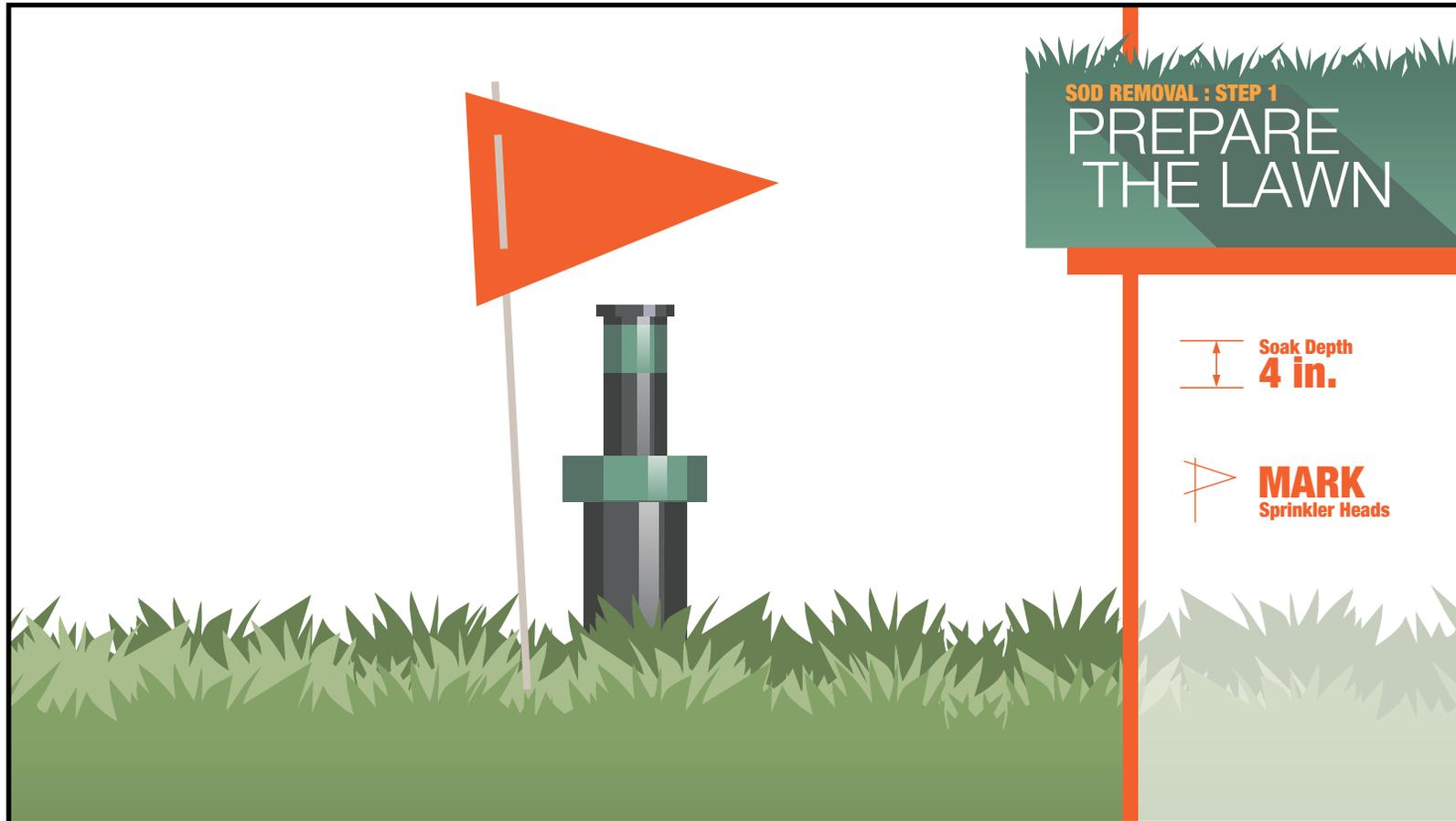
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Water the lawn so the soil is moist at least four inches below the surface.

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Mark any sprinkler heads in the area to be cut to avoid damaging them. You can use the existing sprinkler system and convert it to drip irrigation.

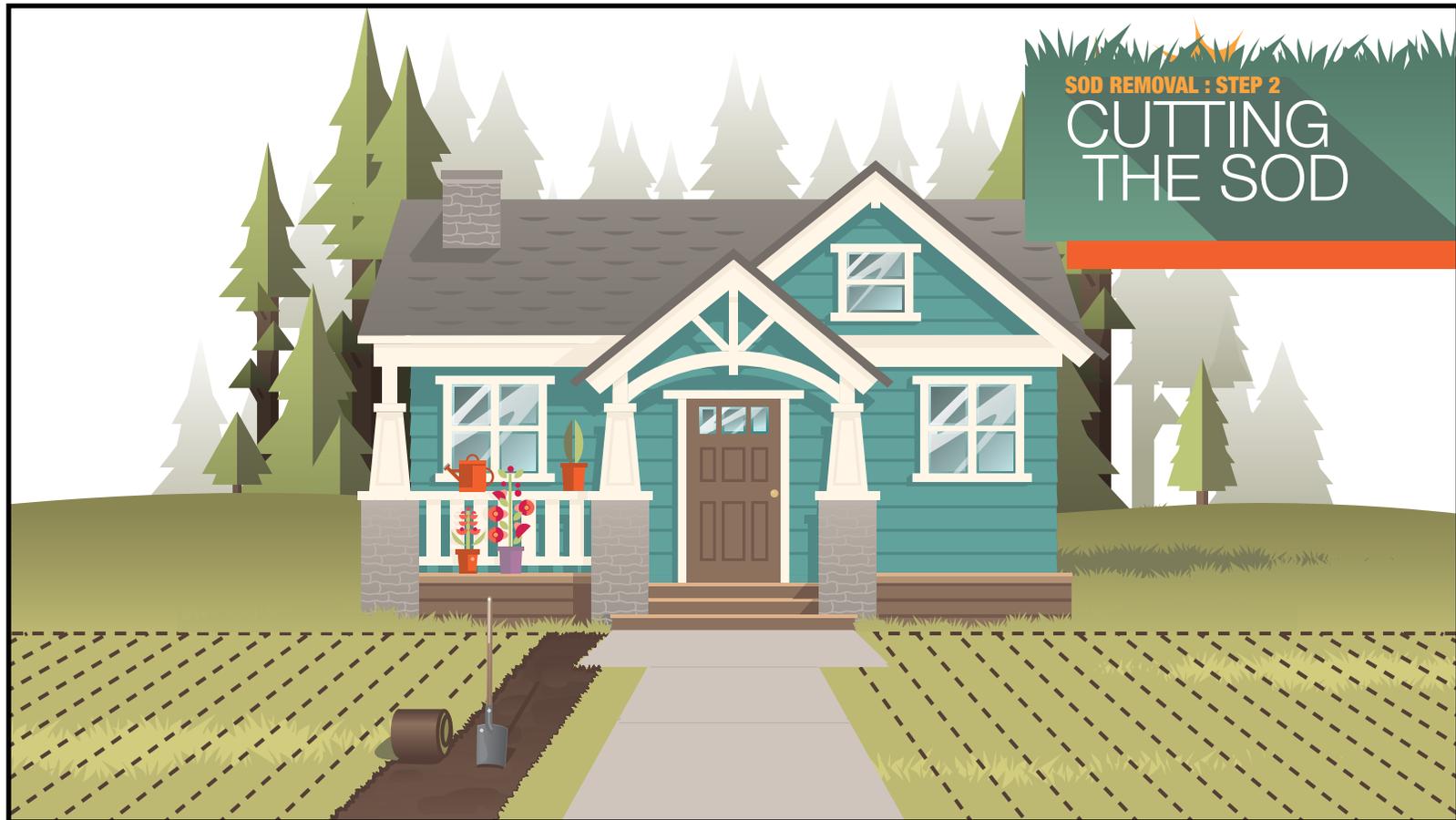
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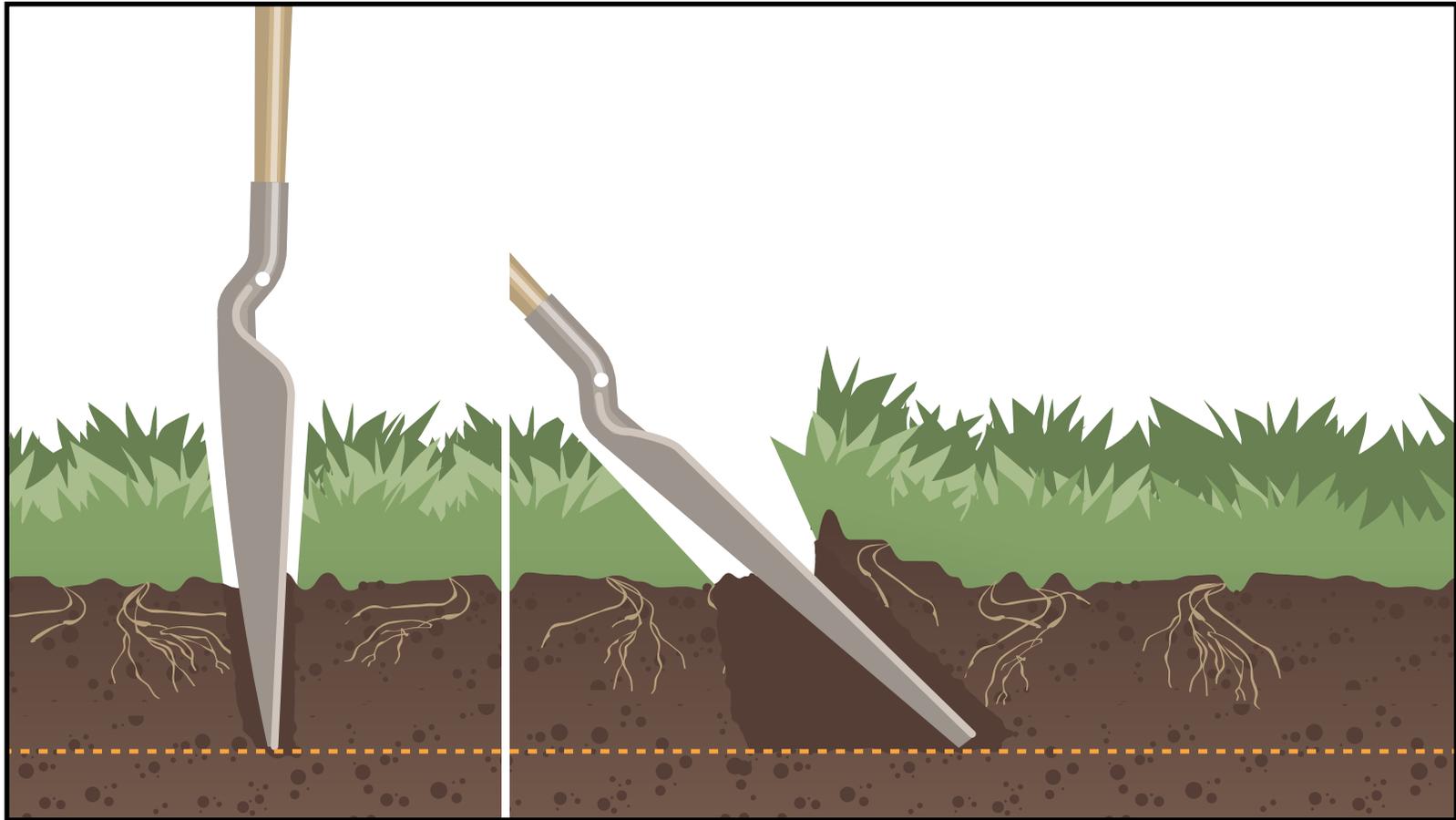
Step two: Cut the sod.

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Start with a spade or edger to cut the turf into long strips if you plan on using a flat shovel to remove the lawn.

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These cuts should be about four inches deep and about the width of the shovel apart. Once the sod is cut in strips, you can start at one end of the strip and slide the flat shovel under the sod, cutting the roots. This method works best for small lawns.

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A motorized sod cutter is recommended for larger lawns. Motorized sod cutters cut grass at the roots so you can remove entire sections of sod and expose the bare ground below.

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Step three: Remove the sod.

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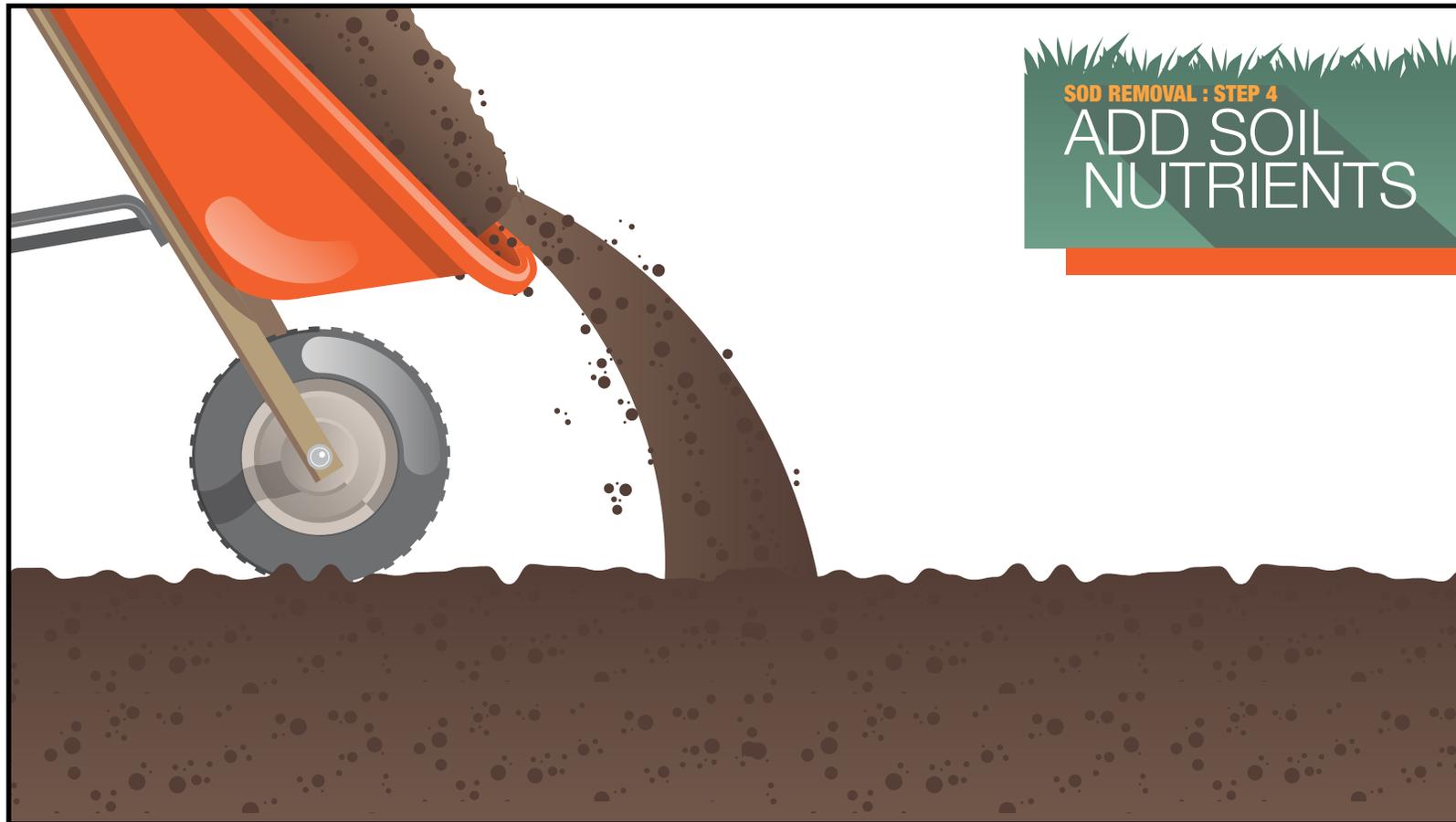
Once the sod strips are separated from the soil, roll them up from one end and or cut them into smaller pieces.

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Step four: Add soil nutrients.

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After removing the top several inches of soil along with the sod, you may need to supplement with soil or add amendments like compost to the area. Soil/compost blends, referred to as planting mix, are available for pickup or delivery from garden centers and sand and gravel businesses.

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Step five: Compost the sod.

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Add sod removed from green-in-winter lawns that is weed free to the compost pile. The cut sod can be laid upside down in the middle of the cleared area to create a decorative mound.

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It can also be used as fill for a lower elevation spot or used to create a berm elsewhere in the garden. Whether relocating to a new area, or composting in place, be sure to cover sod with a layer of newspaper, compost, and mulch to prevent grass from re-growing. Use six to ten sheets of overlapping newspaper, four to six inches of compost, and lastly three to four inches of mulch. This creates good soil and prevents grass from re-growing.

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Sod removed from **brown-in-winter and patchy lawns** should be disposed of to avoid spreading weed seeds and plant parts that will root and grow again.

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The newly-exposed area should be monitored for regrowth. Irrigate the area, and in one to two weeks, weed seeds and regrowth should begin to appear. If regrowth is rampant, using another method to kill the lawn may be necessary.

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Step six: Maintain subsoil and plant.

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Inspect your new garden bed's subsoil and also the underside of the sod that was removed if it will be reused elsewhere. Remove any rocks, remaining clumps of grass, and sizable roots you find. The best time to plant is fall. In the fall the soil is still warm, but the days are cool so plant roots grow rapidly.