

Prepare for Success

If you are ready to transform your water-guzzling grass into healthy soil, just follow along with the recipe for Sheet Mulching, a.k.a. "Soil Lasagna" (see pp. 39-40), and you will have delicious soil in no time. Here are some things to consider as you plan your grass removal process. **Remember to check the rebate requirements to make sure your project is eligible. Be sure to reserve your rebate BEFORE removing grass.**

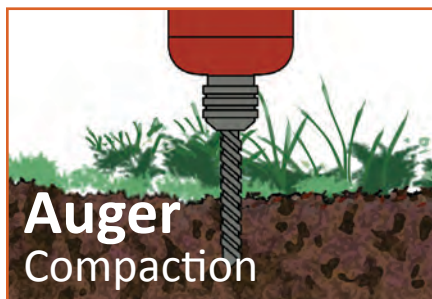


Grass should be living until you remove it. You want to be able to work with the microbes in the soil, and they need water to stay alive. Also, it will be easier to remove grass that is fresh and moist than it will be to try to find the weeds you missed in a clump of dry dead grass.

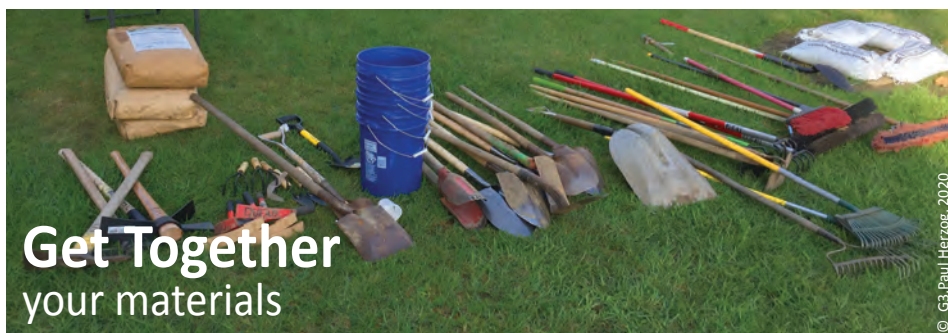
Keep irrigating lawn until the day before you are ready to sod cut or sheet mulch the grass away.



Weeds are encouraged to grow right through plastic weed cloth because soil building is kept from happening when the organic matter from fallen leaves and mulch doesn't touch the soil to begin decomposing. Paper is the only weed barrier needed to keep sunlight from germinating seeds in the soil. Over the course of a few months, the paper breaks down and turn into soil. On steep hillsides, coir mat or compost blankets may be used for stabilization, but always with the objective of complete decomposition within a specified period of time (see p. 57).



Use an 18" long x 5/8" diameter masonry drill bit with a hand drill to make targeted holes in compacted soils. Drill holes throughout the compacted area, and keep them at least 12" apart on center. Follow this hole-making with good compost or worm castings, and thoroughly water in everything.



Use a Site Plan to figure out how much area of grass you are removing. Now you will have to do the calculations for compost, paper and mulch (see p. 63).

You will need the following, if you are going to do Sheet Mulching (see pp. 39-40):

1. 1" of compost
2. 4" – 6" of mulch over the whole area
3. Rolls of painters' paper or cardboard with 6" overlaps

RULE OF THUMB: Multiply the Square Footage of the area by 1.25 to determine the total amount of paper you will need. This multiplier allows you to overlap the paper by at least 6" on all sides to make sure that no sunlight gets in.

Compaction Kills Plants



The bigger the equipment for removing the turf, the more the soil beneath is compacted. Try to only use hand powered or walk-behind equipment rather than a bobcat or other scraper.

Call Dig Alert (811)



Hitting a gas line or water main is no laughing matter! Call at least two days before digging so marks can be made to avoid underground cables, water lines, gas lines and sewer pipes. Be careful when digging around irrigation lines; they can be as shallow as 4" below the surface. Have some irrigation repair materials on hand to be able to fix a leak if you break one.

Till Can Kill



Tilling soil breaks up and kills soil microbes so you are pretty much guaranteed to have weeds pop up afterward. If you have to till, follow up right away with compost or sheet mulching.