



Before

Lose your lawn and Build Healthy Soil

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Stout Design Build, Inc.

Build healthy soil with **Sheet Mulching** (aka Soil Lasagna).

We call this process Sheet Mulching, or **Soil Lasagna**, because it boosts microbes so much, they actually cook down the organic matter and start eating up the grass as food. Once you've made the Soil Lasagna, all you need to do is keep the system wet so the microbes can stay awake and cooking. How long this will take depends upon the kind of grass you have (*see p. 38*). When you're ready, just dig a hole right into it, cutting through paper/cardboard (if it's still there) and plant into the healthy soil beneath.



You Will Need:

Shovels and Rakes
Bins for removed grass and soil
Landscape flags
Compost, Worm Castings, or Compost Tea

Wheelbarrow(s)
Mulch
Painters' Paper or big sheets of Cardboard
Hose with shut off nozzle at end
Water (LOTS!)

Secure Your Permits

Call **DIG ALERT (8-1-1)** at least **two days in advance of digging**. Soil removal and large-scale drainage or grading may require permits from your City.

Rent A Dumpster

For every 1,000 sq. ft. of turf removed you will need 1 low-boy (10 yard capacity) dumpster. A permit from the City is required to put a dumpster on the street.

- 1** After you have checked for permits and any other local restrictions, deal with the lawn you have. If it's cool season, mow it to about 1/2" height, say goodbye and soak it thoroughly with water. Then go to #3. If you want to cut out cool season grass, go to #2.
- 2** If you have warm season grass, rent a sod cutter and remove the grass and 2-3" of roots beneath. The result is that you will be removing up to 6" of grass and soil. Unfortunately, this must be hauled away, so you will need to get a permit and rent a dumpster.
- 3** Flag your sprinkler heads so you can find them and cap or convert them to drip irrigation later (see p. 36).



- 4** Dig a trench 8-12" deep (about 1 shovel depth) and at least 10-24" wide (the wider the better) around all hard surfaces and 6" deep along building foundations. **Before moving on, complete your contouring for rainwater absorption and retention.** (see p. 41).
- 5** Add a (1/2" to 1" deep) layer of compost on top of the graded soil. Alternatively, use humates, a sort of freeze-dried compost available at some landscape supply stores, or spray with compost or worm tea. You are adding good instant food and some beneficial microbes to the soil!
- 6** Water everything well. Wake up, microbes and get the party started!
- 7** Roll out painters' paper, cardboard or other paper. Overlap at the seams by at least 6". No naked soil!



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- 8** On the hardscape edges, make a "burrito" by A) overlapping the edge of the hardscape by 10" - 12" with paper and covering the trench with mulch, and then B) folding back the paper and covering it with mulch to keep grass from re-sprouting immediately.
- 9** The paper is watered again and add another layer of compost here, if you'd like. Rake a thick blanket 4-6" deep of finely chopped mixed leaf and wood mulch over the paper or compost.
- 10** Water the mulch thoroughly. This mulch layer will absorb more water than you ever thought possible to become soaked through. Don't despair; just keep watering!
- 11** Plant right through the layers. The longer you wait to plant, the tastier the lasagna will be for the new plants, but you can plant right away if you removed the grass. **If you kept your cool season grass in place, count on waiting 3-4 months before planting.**
- 12** Step back and admire your work! Have a glass of lemonade too; you earned it!