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## WASHED TURF INSTALLATION

### **Preparation**

As with any form of turf establishment, works associated with base preparation, drainage and irrigation need to be carried out well in advance of turf installation.

Following the incorporation of nutrient and soil amendments, sufficient time needs to be spent on the growing medium to achieve ultimate consolidation and surface smoothness.

Immediately prior to the turf being installed, the turf bed should be watered to field capacity. This will aid in stability and help prevent drying. It is important that if turf cannot be laid immediately, the pallets should be covered with wet hessian and stored in a shady area. Prolonged storage must be avoided.

### **Fertilization - Prior to Laying**

A seedbed fertilizer should be incorporated during the preparation phase to maximise turf establishment. The frequent watering during establishment will accelerate nutrient leaching particularly on sand profiles and fertilisation could be required within two weeks of installation.

### **Mycorrhizal Inoculants**

Incorporating a mycorrhizal product such as Vaminoc-G (which contains specially selected strains of naturally occurring vesicular – arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi) can significantly improve root and shoot growth in washed turf laid on sand based rootzones. Application rate is 20g per square metre broadcast over the top of the rootzone immediately prior to laying the washed turf.

### **Handling Prior to Laying**

It is extremely important that the turf is kept moist prior to laying. Ensure turf rolls on the outer edges do not dry out while waiting to be laid. On large sites when turf cannot be laid immediately, the pallets should be covered with wet hessian and stored in a cool, shady area. In hot weather turf should not be left stacked on the pallets for more than one day and in cooler weather not more than two days. During this storage period the turf should be thoroughly drenched every few hours with water to help prevent excessive heat build-up and subsequent turf deterioration. Drenching will reduce temperature if water is cool and it is continued for some considerable time. Prolonged storage should be avoided.

One of the most important aspects of laying washed turf is to ensure a good root to soil contact at the interface of the growing median and the new turf.

One method to achieve this is to start laying from the near edge, working over the top of the installed turf on plywood boards. At no time should foot traffic be allowed over newly installed turf. The boards help to achieve good soil contact. Alternatively, turf can be laid from the far edge working over the prepared surface on boards, or if boards are not used, continual smoothing of the working face will be required. To achieve root soil contact, a light plate compactor or roller can be used, taking care that the method chosen does not dislodge or damage the turf.

It is important to handle turf carefully to minimise stretching. Edges should be butted up tightly and joints staggered to give a bonded effect.

Any extra effort given to obtaining a smooth firm surface at installation will dramatically reduce the time taken to achieve a playable surface.

### **Watering**

It is critical that the turf is not allowed to dry during the installation and establishment period.

Hand watering will normally be required during the installation process and the water supply must be established before commencing to lay turf. Frequent light watering must be maintained until the turf takes root, normally three to five days, at which time frequency may be progressively reduced to encourage deep rooting. Once established, watering should be tailored to meet the prevailing weather and turf requirements.

### **Additional Fertilising**

Additional fertilizer may be necessary to maximise establishment particularly on nutrient leaching sandy profiles (depending on the time of year). Light, frequent applications are best.

### **Mowing**

Attention to detail at installation should allow mowing to commence approximately six days after laying. A sharp walk-behind reel mower must be used and no more than 25% of leaf area should be removed at any one time.

### **Pesticides**

The frequent watering during establishment could promote fungal diseases particularly in a humid environment. Preventative or curative applications of fungicide may be required.

### **Aeration**

When the turf is well rooted, tine aeration is recommended to penetrate the turf mat, followed by light top dressings.