KNOW THE SITE. PREPARE THE SOIL. HAVE WATER READY.

Starting a new lawn? Start with a plan.

A homeowner's sod installation guide for San Angelo and Central West Texas

Sod gives you green coverage quickly. A lasting lawn starts earlier: choose grass for the site, prepare the soil, and have water ready before delivery. Finish the groundwork before the pallet arrives.

1 · CHOOSE

Choose grass for your yard, not just its color

Bring photos and describe sunlight, foot traffic, irrigation and how much mowing you want to do. Cultivars within a species differ.

- **Bermudagrass:** a strong choice for sunny, well-used lawns. It tolerates drought and traffic, but struggles in shade. Improved varieties can require more mowing and fertility.
- **St. Augustinegrass:** generally the most shade-tolerant warm-season lawn grass. In Central and West Texas it needs supplemental irrigation and is less drought-tolerant than Bermuda or zoysia. It is not a heavy-traffic choice.
- **Zoysiagrass:** offers light to moderate shade tolerance, depending on cultivar, and suits moderate traffic. It can turn brown during extended drought. Maintenance needs vary by type.

Shade tolerance does not mean a grass will thrive in deep shade. Assess the actual sunlight on the site. Discuss difficult shaded areas before buying sod.



Site preparation before sod is laid. Company photograph from the current New Lawn page. This image shows prepared soil, not a named cultivar or a finished lawn.

2 · MEASURE

Measure first, then order

Sketch the planting area. Divide it into rectangles, multiply length by width in feet, add the sections, and subtract beds, paving and other areas not being sodded. Ask for help measuring curves.

Square feet = length × width. Allow extra for trimming and irregular edges, based on the supplier's recommendation. Pallet coverage varies by variety and supplier; confirm the actual square feet per pallet rather than assuming every pallet is the same.

Call early with your area, preferred grass and installation date. Confirm availability, current price, pallet coverage, pickup or delivery arrangements, and what services are included. Sod supply does not automatically include grading or installation.

3 · PREPARE

Build the foundation before delivery

- **Soil-test first.** Use the results to choose nutrient and pH amendments. Do not automatically add phosphorus, lime or sulfur. Ask about a starter fertilizer only if the soil needs it.
- Control existing weeds before planting. If using an herbicide, follow its exact label, including planting intervals and protection of desirable plants. No universal waiting period applies to every product.
- Remove construction debris, stones and roots that obstruct installation. Address compaction while the soil is workable, not wet. Do not till through important tree roots or bury them under added soil without professional advice.
- Grade to drain away from buildings without creating low pockets or sending excess water onto neighbors. Resolve drainage problems before laying sod.
- Install or repair irrigation before final grading. Wet and let loosened soil settle, allow it to dry, then correct low spots. Finish with a firm, smooth surface.

Ready check: soil prepared, drainage checked, irrigation tested, help arranged. Warm-season sod roots fastest while actively growing.

MATCH THE WORK TO THE GRASS AND THE SITE

Lay it well. Water the roots. Watch it establish.

4 · INSTALL

Install promptly and make soil contact

Sod is perishable. Arrange to lay it promptly after delivery; ask when it was harvested. Texas A&M advises installation within 36 hours of harvest, sooner in hot weather. That is an outside guideline, not permission to leave a pallet sitting in the heat.



Start along a straight edge. Lay staggered rows like brickwork, with edges snugly butted, not overlapped. Trim around beds and paving. Minimize traffic and wheelbarrow ruts in the prepared soil.

After laying, roll with a suitable sod roller to reduce air pockets and improve soil contact. Avoid working saturated soil. Water promptly; do not let newly laid pieces dry while the rest of the job waits.

5 · WATER

Water by what is happening below the sod

At installation: wet the sod and underlying soil, not just the leaves. Lift corners in several locations to check that water has reached the soil beneath. Texas A&M publications describe initial wetting depths of approximately 2 to 4 inches.

While rooting: keep the sod and root zone moist, not saturated. Inspect beneath pieces and adjust for heat, wind, rain, soil and coverage. Hot weather can require daily watering; cool conditions may need less. Let conditions, not a fixed calendar, set the schedule.

As roots develop: gradually lengthen the time between waterings and wet deeper into the developing root zone. Once well rooted, move toward deeper, less frequent irrigation. Do not keep an established lawn on a new-sod schedule. Check current local watering rules before installation and arrange any required authorization.

Our watering approach. For brand-new sod, BES-TEX favors an open hose with the flow gentle and moving. Wet every piece and the soil beneath; pause if water runs off or washes soil away. A shower-style wand works well for established lawns.



New sod: open-hose watering



Established lawn: shower-style spray

6 · ESTABLISH

Mow and feed when the lawn is ready

Begin mowing when sod is rooted and the soil is firm enough to avoid ruts. Use a sharp blade and the mowing height appropriate to the grass and cultivar. Remove no more than one-third of the leaf blade at one mowing. Rooting and growing conditions, not a guaranteed number of days, determine readiness.

Base fertilizer selection on soil-test needs, grass type and active growth. There is no universal need for 12-24-12 or a fixed weekly feeding calendar. Keep fertilizer off pavement and out of runoff. New sod can be sensitive to herbicides; use only products labeled for that grass and establishment stage.

Bring your plan. We will help you check it. Bring measurements, sunlight photos and a soil test. One-pallet minimum; Mon-Fri 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Central; delivery extra. Call to confirm price and availability.

Sources 1. Chalmers and McAfee, Texas A&M AgriLife, How to Select and Install Sod (SCSC-PU-125) · 2. Chalmers and McAfee, Texas A&M AgriLife, Turfgrass Establishment for Texas (SCSC-PU-079) · 3. Segars, Chalmers and McAfee, Texas A&M AgriLife, Turfgrass Selection for Texas (SCSC-PU-124) · 4. Chalmers and McAfee, Texas A&M AgriLife, Lawn Fertilization for Texas Warm-Season Grasses (SCSC-PU-034) · 5. Reynolds and Elmore, Texas A&M AgriLife, Bermudagrass: Home Lawn Management Calendar (SCSC-PU-167) · 6. BES-TEX, New Lawn page (ordering details; call to confirm).