



Tips on How to Remove Lawn



SOD CUTTER

A sod cutter is a gas-powered machine that is maneuvered much like a rototiller. The height (depth of the cut) of the blade is adjustable. Sod cutters can be rented from local rental centres.

*Rolls of lawn cut by a sod cutter.
Credit: Toni Boot*

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes most of the existing grass roots. • Removes a thick layer of weed seeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very hard, heavy work. • Removes the most nutrient-rich layer of soil. • Must remove sod under trees by hand to avoid root damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark pop-up sprayers to avoid damage. • Exercise care when using a sod cutter on slopes or uneven ground. • Mow the grass before you begin; remove the turf when it is not too wet.

ROTOTILLER

This method takes patience, as you need to rototill several times. Between each tilling, let the lawn sit four to six weeks to allow the grass/weeds to re-sprout.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to maneuver than a sod cutter. • Retains the layer of soil containing the most nutrients and organic matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area will be disrupted for several months. • Must remove sod under trees by hand to avoid root damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not rototill if your turf contains bindweed or <u>any</u> noxious weed that propagates by rhizomes. • Unless you are certain your underground irrigation system is deeper than the tines of the rototiller, do not use this method. • Mark sprinkler heads of underground irrigation before beginning. • Be prepared to spend time raking and leveling the tilled area.

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'LASAGNA GARDENING'

This is a layered mulch system. New plantings can be planted through the mulch, but if you've planned where new vegetation is to go, it is easier to plant before beginning. Click here for a Fact Sheet on removing your lawn successfully by lasagna gardening.



SPRAYING WITH ECO-CLEAR

If you are planning to overseed or reseed your existing turf, this method is an option to consider closely. Use a 'mild' herbicide called 'Eco-Clear'. This product is a blend of acetic and citric acids. Always follow the label directions closely. Keep humans and pets off recently sprayed areas.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little labour involved. • Kills turf and growing weeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-Clear is relatively new on the market; it is expensive. • May need several applications to kill some perennial weeds. • Does not kill weed seeds, only vegetative growth. • Do not spray on a windy day or when rain is forecast within 24 hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential use of cosmetic herbicides by other than certified applicators is being reviewed in BC. Many communities have already banned such use. • Eco-Clear is a post-emergent, foliar spray; it is only effective on actively growing vegetation.



SOIL SOLARIZATION

Solarization is accomplished by completely covering an area with clear or black plastic during July and August. The intense heat that builds up under the plastic kills the turf and weeds.

Credit: Lesley Field

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to do. • Does not remove organic matter or nutrients from the soil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can cause an anaerobic effect, killing beneficial micro and macro organisms in the soil. • Heavy winds can displace the plastic; anchor it very well with stones, soil, or wood. • Unsightly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mow the grass as short as possible and water well before covering the area with the plastic. The combination of heat and water speeds up turf decomposition. • Use a 4-6 mils weight of plastic. • Typically, leave the plastic on the soil for 6-8 weeks.