



OZARKS OUTDOOR SOLUTIONS

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Seed vs. Sod: Which is Better for Building a Thriving Lawn?

If you're fighting the battle for a beautiful lawn, you may have found yourself wondering whether seed or sod is better. Which will give you the best long-term results? There are a few things to consider before you decide your next move. Here is some information that will help you decide which lawn building technique will be best for you.

What are They

Sod: Transplanting mature turf that has been cared for by a professional. Can be rolled out like a rug. Usually involves hiring a pro to install, especially for large areas.

Seed: Growing grass from seed; Involves planting and sprouting your own grass. Can be done yourself or hired out.

Installation Costs

Sod – Simply put, sod is the most expensive option because you are essentially paying someone else for time and materials of growing the grass. And, it is *dramatically* more expensive than seed. Price of sod can run between \$0.50-\$1.00 per square foot, with installation running between \$150 and \$300 per pallet. If money is no problem, sod may be the winning choice.

Seed – Financially, seeding is an appealing choice as the cost of even the best seed mix is still a lot cheaper than sod. Grass seed costs about \$0.01 per square foot. Installation varies widely depending upon the method used. The cost of professional seeding is much lower than sodding, as it is less labor-intensive, and requires less energy to transport the materials. If budget is your driving factor, seed wins out.

Time Requirements

Sod – No question, if you need a nice lawn right away, sod is your hero. This option provides an “instant lawn;” you can go from dirt to green lawn in a day. It does require constant maintenance after installation. Sod must be kept watered. The speed of rooting varies with each season, and the rooting is essential to the longevity and health of the grass; fall and spring are optimal times to lay sod, though it can be laid any time during the year if water is available. Roots establish quicker than seeds, but may it not root as well. .

Seed – It takes a lot longer to grow a dense, lush lawn so if time is a factor, seed may be the losing option. If you've got time to tend the lawn, and can wait until the optimal growing season, seed is worthy of consideration. The time of year you plant is critical and limited. Early fall is best because there is more likelihood of weed infiltration in the spring. Seeding your own turf requires a lot of watering as well. Seeded lawns must be watered frequently, but not deeply, to keep the seed moist during germination. If

you seed your lawn and it rains, the germination pattern can end up being quite irregular, and you may need to overseed several times.

Lawn Quality

Sod – Though initially sod may appear weed free, it is not always guaranteed to be weed free. Sod is a great alternative for sloped areas or erosion-prone areas where seed would struggle to survive. On the down side, only certain types of grass are grown for sodding so your choices are limited. If you need to tailor your yard to a specific environment, seeding with specific species for your area would be a better way to go. Sod is not known for shade tolerance. Sod can shrink and leave spaces which weeds easily invade. Turf needs to be overlapped when laid. Sod is also the cleanest choice; not a lot of dust or mud.

Seed – Though it can take longer to establish a dense lawn, over time I think seed edges out sod on quality. There are more grass types and varieties to choose from so can select a turf you know will grow well in your area. The probability of a stronger root system developing in the beginning means you're more likely to have a stronger, healthier lawn over time. With seed, the grass develops in the same environment where it will live so you don't face transplant issues and sensitivities. However, seeding can be frustrating. You might have to reseed, sometimes germination doesn't take in spots or seed can be washed away. And it is messy, with lots of dust and mud at first.

Critical Component for Sod and Seed

The critical component to a thriving lawn, whether you sod or seed, is the soil. The investment you make in soil preparation will give you the best strategic advantage and increase your odds of success.

It is absolutely essential that grass be well rooted in order to thrive. Often even sod fails because owners do not prepare the soil well before laying it. Prepare the site to ensure your lawn is healthy either way. Conduct a soil test first and learn the characteristics of your soil. The best type of soil for growing turf is sandy loam (mostly sand with some clay and silt). Clay needs to be amended with organic matter such as peat. You may need to finely grade the area and add phosphorous, potassium fertilizer or nitrogen depending on your soil test. Roll or pack the soil slightly. The effort and time you put into the soil preparation will make a world of difference in winning the battle for a beautiful lawn whether you seed or sod.