

step 3

H₂O[®]VERHAUL



Removing
Your Turf

Before
you kick
your turf
to the curb,
prep for
success
with these
expert tips.



Check the tips
off the list as
you go.



Know what's below.

Before you dig, call your utility company and find out if they need to flag utility lines.



Follow the rules.

Be sure to adhere to city code and any Homeowners Association (HOA) guidelines. There may be city code limitations and HOAs may require a landscape conversion plan and timeline for approval.



Plan for leftovers.

Getting rid of sod can be tricky. Whether you want to turn sod over and use it as compost, drive it to the dump or place a post on NextDoor.com, you'll want to devise what to do with leftover turf ahead of time.



Barrier-free is the way to be.

Don't put weed barriers over your turf-free, water-wise plant area. They tend to damage plant roots and plastic versions prevent rainwater absorption.



The circle of leaf.

Incorporate dead grass, compost and leaves back into your soil by tilling it in at a depth of 6 inches or more.



X marks the spot.

Contain turf removal areas before getting started. You can do this using wooden stakes and string or even a garden hose to outline an area.



Protect your plants.

Depending on the turf removal process you select, be sure to read the tips in advance on how to not harm existing plants, trees, shrubs and bushes.



Select a method and say goodbye to your grass.



Find the turf-removal method that works for your personal skill level, timeline and neighborhood guidelines.

The Key... to your sod removal success



Method



Timeline



Benefits



Challenges

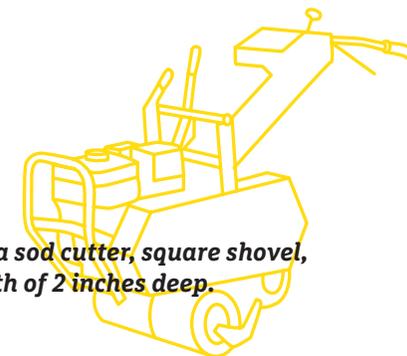


How to do it



Sod Cutter

The physical removal of turf using a sod cutter, square shovel, or grubbing hoe at a minimum depth of 2 inches deep.



On average, two people can manually remove and haul away 100 square feet of turf per hour.



Fastest method, leaves majority of soil intact, works well for large areas (100 square feet or more).



Labor intensive, may not work for long-rooted grasses like Bermuda Grass, if you don't kill the grass first or deep rototill the soil after there is a high chance of turf regrowth.



1 Contact a local tool supplier or garden center to rent a sod cutter. Be sure you have adequate transportation like a low trailer bed, these machines are heavy!

2 Get detailed instructions on how to operate the sod cutter.

3 Cut the sod into narrow strips and roll them up.

4 If you can't reach an area with the sod cutter, use a shovel or hoe. Dig small, manageable squares at least two inches deep to remove the roots.

5 Dispose of the sod according to your plans.



Solarization



Cover turf with a plastic sheet. This will create a very high temperature environment that kills your grass.



Six weeks to six months



Efficient, inexpensive, not labor intensive, minimal impact, can compost dead grass



Only works in hot, sunny areas. Slow method, not very visually appealing. May require you to consult your HOA for approval.



- 1 Cut your grass as short as possible and water it well to prepare the turf.
- 2 Cover the turf area with heavy sheets of plastic. Hold in place with heavy rocks or metal stakes. Make sure that the entire area is covered, and that it is airtight with no leaks or holes.
- 3 The plastic will act as a trap for the sun's radiant heat, and it will kill the grass by heating the top six inches of soil to about 140°F.
- 4 Manually remove turf located in close proximity to existing trees and shrubs, taking care not to damage roots when digging. Alternatively, use 3-4 inches of mulch to smother grass, once the grass has been killed, spread the mulch out.
- 5 Depending on the weather, leave plastic in place for four to eight weeks or until the grass is dead.
- 6 Remove the plastic and using a rototiller, incorporate dead grass back into the soil to at least 6 inches or more.



Sheet Covering / Lasagna Gardening



This method allows you to kill your turf by covering it with newspaper or cardboard and layering it with organic matter and mulch.



About six months



Efficient, inexpensive and easy to execute with minimal impact,* this method doesn't require the removal of turf. It also creates rich soil and provides a place to compost kitchen scraps, leaves, yard clippings, etc.



Slow method, not good for steep or large areas of grass.



- 1 Cut your grass as short as possible. This will ensure that the newspapers or cardboard lay flat in place.
- 2 Spread a two inch layer of compost that is high in nitrogen over the area to be replaced. Moisten well.
- 3 Cover the area of turf that you wish to kill with overlapping cardboard (used boxes) or newspaper (10-12 sheets thick). Be sure to fully overlap in different directions and that no sunlight can get through, otherwise, the grass will find a way to survive.
- 4 Water the newspaper/cardboard but not too heavily, or the paper may start to tear.
- 5 Weigh the newspaper/cardboard down with 4 inches of wood chips or mulch to keep it from blowing.
- 6 Plant the following season.

*Concerned about the toxicity of using newspaper in your soil? Don't worry. Modern ink is usually soy-based and safe to use on your lawn.

No actual pasta required.





Vinegar

A simple, D.I.Y. method using horticultural vinegar.



About one week



Quick and environmentally friendly



Not ideal for large areas. Works best in hot conditions. The effectiveness of this method has been debated.



- 1 Purchase horticultural vinegar of a 20 percent concentration from a garden center or online.
- 2 Do not apply near plants that you want to keep. Manually remove turf located in close proximity to existing trees and shrubs, taking care not to damage roots when digging.
- 3 Saturate the grassy area that you would like to kill with vinegar.
- 4 Wait two to four days for your grass to die. If it hasn't, reapply.
- 5 Dig it up and prepare your garden for planting.
- 6 Rototill dead grass into the soil as deeply as possible, at least six inches.



Glyphosate

This method applies a chemical (Glyphosate-sold as Roundup, Kleenup, Kill Zall, ComPleet) to kill actively-growing grass.



7 to 10 days



Quick



Careful application to not damage adjoining grass or other nontarget plants, not great for large areas, controversial regarding environment but approved by Colorado State University Extension.



- 1 Use a spade to cut a slit between turf you want to save and that to be killed. (Severing underground roots avoids movement of herbicide spray via the roots to turf designated for retention.)
- 2 Do not apply near plants that you want to keep. Manually remove turf located in close proximity to existing trees and shrubs, taking care not to damage roots when digging.
- 3 Use a low-pressure, coarse-droplet spray with a handheld, cardboard or metal spray shield. Better yet, consider a wick-type applicator available at many garden centers.
- 4 Apply only when you are certain it will not rain for at least seven hours.
- 5 Wait seven to ten days, then follow the steps for amending your soil prior to planting alternative ground covers, shrubs or flowers.



Did you know?
A well-designed
water-wise
landscape can
increase your
property value
by as much as
15 percent.



Additional Resources

Visit **ThorntonWater.com/H2Overhaul** for additional ideas to help you plan.

You'll find links to resources such as step-by-step videos for various sod removal techniques and descriptions of how to select the technique that fits for your project.

Congrats
on making
it through
step 3!



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ThorntonWater.com/H2Overhaul

