



B.C. STANDARD FOR TURFGRASS SOD AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1999

Introduction

The British Columbia Standard for Turfgrass Sod was prepared by a joint committee of the B.C. Society of Landscape Architect, the B.C. Nursery Trades Association, and the Sod Growers of B.C. As a part of the British Columbia Landscape Standard, its purpose is to document standards of quality for turfgrass so that the desired quality can be specified, defined and installed for each application.

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8.1 General

8.1.1 Intent: This Standard states quality requirements for quality grades and classifications with regard to types of grass in turfgrass sod. This Standard is intended to be read in conjunction with the entire Landscape Standard, particularly with regard to Section 1. General, Section 2. General Requirements, Section 6. Growing Medium and Section 7. Lawns and Grass. As in other Sections of the Landscape Standard, in this Section:

- .1 shall means - that the sentence is a mandatory requirement of this Standard
- .2 should means - that the sentence is a recommendation

8.1.2 Pertinent Standards and Legislation

- .1 Canada Seed Act
- .2 American Sod Producers Association Guideline Specifications to Turfgrass Sodding
- .3 British Columbia Weed Control Act
- .4 Canada Seed and Fertilizer Act

8.1.3 Turfgrass Quality Grades: This Standard divides turfgrass sod into the following quality grades:

.1 Nursery (Cultivated) Turfgrass Sod

- a. No. 1 Premium Grade
- b. No. 2 Standard Grade
- c. No. 3 Commercial Grade

.2 Field (Pasture) Turfgrass Sod

See 8.2, Products for quality requirements for each grade.

8.1.4 Specifying and Identifying Turfgrass: Turfgrass sod should be specified by reference to the quality grades in this Standard, and should be fully specified with regard to the following characteristics:

.1 Mix of Grass Types: Unless otherwise specified, the mix of grasses in the sod shall be the producer's standard mix and shall meet the requirements of this Standard for the quality grade appropriate to the location.

Specialty or custom mixes may include mixes other than the producer's standard mix, or single species sod such as Kentucky Bluegrass sod.

2 Intended Function or Area: The British Columbia Landscape Standard identifies three classes of grass area with regard to function, quality and appearance. Table 8-1 shows these classes in relation to the recommended quality grade of turfgrass. Specifications should state the quality grade of turfgrass and other pertinent information (e.g. use of the area for play, shady conditions). Table 8-1 also shows the usual level of maintenance for each class of lawn. See Section 14. Landscape Maintenance.

Table 8-1: RECOMMENDED TURFGRASS QUALITY FOR VARIOUS AREAS

Area	General Description / Typical Locations/ Usual Level of Maintenance	Recommended Turfgrass Quality Grade
Class 1 (Lawn)	High profile building sites, areas around public entrances to buildings of lower profile, small urban and suburban sites. This is the minimum standard for residential and commercial. Maintenance	No. 1 Premium or No. 2 Standard

	Level 1 "WELL- GROOMED" or Level 2 "GROOMED".	
Class 2 (Grass)	Large suburban sites, public areas around large facilities with park-like conditions, industrial sites. Maintenance Level 3 "MODERATE " or Level 4 "OPEN SPACE / PLAY ".	No. 3 Commercial
Class 3 (Rough Grass)	Rural sites, verges of runways, farms, highway rights-of-way, temporary grass. Commercial or Field Turfgrass cover. Maintenance Level 5 "BACKGROUND" or Level 6 "SERVICE and INDUSTRIAL".	Usually seeded however No. 3 may be specified.

- 8.1.5 .3 Special Growing Medium Requirements: Unless otherwise specified, the growing medium for turf shall be the producer's standard growing medium. Other growing media may be specified, including sand of specific gradation.
- .4 Other Special Requirements: Specifiers should identify any other special requirements, such as whether reinforcing mesh is required or prohibited.
- 8.1.5 Certification of Turfgrass: The supplier shall provide with each shipment of turfgrass sod a label or statement certifying the quality grade and varieties of grass in the sod, and that the sod meets the requirements of this Standard for the stated grade.
- 8.1.6 Handling and Storage
- .1 Sod shall be protected during transportation to prevent drying out and shall arrive at the site in a fresh and healthy condition.
- .2 Sod shall be installed as soon as possible after arrival. If there is any delay in installation, the sod shall be kept moist and cool at all times until installation.
- .3 During the growing season, sod shall be installed within 24 hours after delivery to the site, and within 36 hours after harvesting.
- 8.1.7 Finish Grade Preparation: See Section 7. Lawns and Grass, 7.1.4.
- Recommended Conditions for Acceptance: See Section 7. Lawns and Grass, 7.1.5. Sod
- 8.1.8 shall be sufficiently established that its roots are growing into the underlying growing medium. Sodded areas shall have been mown at least once, to a height of 38 mm (1.5").
- 8.1.9 Maintenance: See Section 7. Lawns and Grass, 7.3.2.

8.2 Products

- 8.2.1 All Turfgrass Sod
- .1 Suitability: All turfgrass sod shall be suited to the locality, site conditions, and intended function of each project or area.

.2 Grass Mixture in Sod: Supplier's standard sod (No. 1 and No. 2 Grade) shall be grown from Certified Seed of improved turf cultivars registered for sale in Canada, suited to the intended use.

Species suited for British Columbia include:

- a. Turf-type Perennial Ryegrass
- b. Turf-type Kentucky Bluegrass
- c. Turf-type Red Fescue (including Chewing's and Creeping Fescues).

Supplier's standard sod shall be composed of any two or more of the above species mixed in combinations such that no single kind constitutes more than 75% of the grass in the turf.

Specialty or custom sod shall be as specified or as certified by the Supplier, composed of a single variety or combinations of varieties of improved turf cultivars registered for sale in Canada, suited to the intended use.

Specialty sod mixes may include:

- a. Colonial Bentgrass
- b. Creeping Bentgrass
- c. Turf-type Tall Fescue
- d. Hard Fescue

.3 Size of Sections: Turfgrass sod shall be cut by able methods by machines designed for that purpose, to the supplier's standard length and width, plus or minus 12 mm (.5") in width and plus or minus five percent (5%) in length. Broken pieces and torn or uneven ends are not acceptable.

.4 Thickness of Cut: Turfgrass sod shall be cut at a uniform soil thickness (excluding top growth and thatch) of 15 mm (5/8") plus or minus 5 mm (1/4").

.5 Strength of Sod: Sod shall be strong enough that a standard sized section can be grasped at one end, picked up and handled without damage.

.6 Moisture Content: Turfgrass sod shall not be harvested or transplanted when its moisture content is too low or too high, resulting in potential damage to the sod.

.7 Grass Height: The height of the grass in the sod at the time of harvesting shall be between 40 mm (1.5") and 60 mm (2.5").

.8 Thatch: Turfgrass sod shall be reasonably free from thatch. Up to 13 mm (1/2") of thatch (uncompressed) is acceptable.

.9 Diseases, Fungi, Nematodes, Insects: Turfgrass sod shall be reasonably free from diseases, fungi, nematodes and soil-born insects, to the extent that with proper installation methods and initial maintenance as described in Sections 7. and 8., new turf will not deteriorate due to such causes.

.10 Weeds: All turfgrass sod shall be absolutely free from plants designated as noxious weeds by Agriculture Canada or by provincial authorities.

- a. Nursery turfgrass sod shall be free of broadleaf weeds and undesirable grasses to the extent required for each quality grade.
- b. Field turfgrass sod shall contain not more than 10 weeds per 10 M² (100 sq. ft.).

8.2.2 Nursery (Cultivated) Turfgrass Sod: Nursery (Cultivated) Turfgrass Sod shall be quality sod planted on cultivated agricultural land and grown specifically for sod purposes. It shall be mown regularly and otherwise maintained to obtain reasonable quality and uniformity. Nursery Turfgrass Sod shall be grown from Certified Seed of improved turf cultivars registered for sale in Canada (except as noted for No. 3 Commercial Grade).

Following are the requirements specific to the three quality grades of Nursery Turfgrass Sod:

.1 No. 1 Premium Grade

Premium Grade turfgrass shall contain only the species and varieties of grasses shown on the supplier's certificate or sales slip, and no weeds or foreign grasses, including *Poa annua* (i.e. no other varieties or species). Growing turfgrass in sterilized soil is an effective method of ensuring freedom from weeds. Since this method also eliminates dormant seeds, it will prevent problems later on.

.2 No. 2 Standard Grade

Standard Grade turfgrass shall show no visible broadleaf weeds when viewed from a standing position, and the turf shall be visibly consistent with no obvious patches of foreign grasses, including *Poa annua*. In no case may the total amount of foreign grasses exceed 2% of the total canopy for any 10 M² (100 sq. ft.) of turf.

.3 No. 3 Commercial Grade

Commercial Grade turfgrass is any nursery turfgrass that does not meet the requirements for Premium or Standard Grades. Commercial Grade turfgrass may be composed of grasses from non-certified seed, or of unknown origin, and may contain noticeable amounts of *Poa annua*.

8.2.3 Field (Pasture) Turfgrass Sod: Field turfgrass sod is all sod that does not meet the requirements for Nursery sod. It may consist of sod lifted from pastures or meadows.

8.3 Execution

8.3.1 Time Limitations: Turfgrass Sod shall be harvested, delivered and installed within 36 hours, unless a suitable preservation method is approved prior to delivery. Sod not installed within 36 hours of harvesting or within 24 hours of delivery may be rejected if there is any evidence of deterioration.

8.3.2 Sodding

.1 The growing medium under all sodded areas shall be spread evenly over the approved subgrade to the specified depth. The minimum depth of growing medium under sodded areas shall be as shown in Section 6. Growing Medium, Table 6-5.

.2 The required fertilizer shall be applied to and well worked into the growing medium by discing, raking or harrowing, at the rates specified. This shall be done within 48 hours before laying sod.

.3 If the surface is dry, growing medium shall be lightly moistened immediately before laying sod.

.4 Sod shall be laid staggered, closely knit together in such a manner that no open joints wider than 2 mm are visible, and no pieces are stretched or overlapped.

.5 Sod shall be laid smooth and flush with adjoining grass areas and paving and top surface of curbs unless shown otherwise on the drawings.

.6 On slopes of approximately 2:1 and steeper, sod shall be laid lengthwise up the slope, and every row shall be pegged with wooden lath pegs, of sufficient length to ensure satisfactory anchorage of the sod, at intervals of not more than 0.5 metres. Pegs shall be driven flush with sod.

.7 Erosion control netting shall be installed in sodded areas where required, and where required, erosion control mesh or netting shall be placed and secured with stakes or staples set firmly into the ground to a minimum depth of 150 mm. Spacing of stakes or staples shall be adequate to ensure complete anchorage of the sod to the ground.

.8 New sod shall be protected from heavy foot traffic during laying. Planks shall be placed if necessary to prevent damage.

.9 Sod shall be cut where necessary only with sharp tools.

.10 The sodded area shall be rolled, tamped, or planked providing sufficient pressure, to ensure a good bond between sod and growing medium.

.11 The sod area shall be watered immediately with sufficient amounts to saturate the sod and upper 100 mm of growing medium.

.12 Before pedestrian traffic is permitted on the turf, and after the turf is well rooted into the growing medium, pegs or stakes shall be removed or driven at least 50 mm (2") below the surface.

Turflite News August/September 1999

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