

Sod is stacked on wooden pallets either in rolls or as flat slabs. The amount of sod harvested can be doubled if sod is rolled instead of stacked as flat slabs (4). However, rolled, harvested sod must also be more mature. Approximately 400 to 500 sq. ft. of sod is stacked per pallet with a forklift required for placing pallets on transport trucks. A tractor-trailer load typically consists of 10,000 sq. ft. of sod (Figure 6). Forklifts that are rear-mounted on tractor trailers provide a quick and easy method for unloading.



Figure 6. Tractor-trailer loaded with sod.

Thickness of soil removed during harvesting varies with turfgrass species. Removing the least amount of soil is the objective of an efficient sod harvest. Soil conservation must be a priority in order to ensure long-term productivity of the soil. Ideally, 1/4 to 1/2 inch of rootzone should be removed when sod is cut. Sod that is thin-cut is easier to handle, less expensive to transport, and knits in more quickly than thicker-cut sod. However, sod that is thin-cut is more susceptible to drought injury.

Growers harvest up to 40,000 sq. ft. per acre per cutting. However, normal yields are generally between 28,000 and 38,000 sq. ft. per acre. A two-inch ribbon of grass is typically left between harvested strips for re-establishment from stolons (Figure 7). Bermudagrass producers often clean-cut a field because bermudagrass re-establishes from rhizomes, as well as from stolons. Centipedegrass and St. Augustinegrass must re-cover the ground with stolons from ribbons left between harvested strips. Once harvesting has been performed, these strips should be lightly incorporated into the soil by rototilling and rolled to smooth the soil surface. If this is not done, the remaining strips will provide a bumpy surface for mowing, fertilizing,

and harvesting equipment. If practical, harvest the second crop at 90° to the first to minimize this uneven surface. For bahiagrass fields, ribbons may or may not be left. In either case, the fields are usually reseeded to hasten recovery.



Figure 7. Two-inch ribbon of grass left between harvested strips for re-establishment (top) after rototilling (bottom).

Separating turfgrass cultivar areas in the field must be achieved to prevent contamination from adjacent areas. Normally, this is achieved by carefully planning, before establishment, with the use of service road or drainage ditches between cultivars. If these barriers are not used, a minimum of eight feet of tilled or bare soil must be maintained between grasses. A nonselective herbicide such as glyphosate may be used to maintain bare soil.

Marketing

Wholesale buyers for most sod producers consist of landscape maintenance/ contractors, garden