

## Introduction

Although big roll turf installation requires more knowledge and different equipment than standard rolls or slabs, there are significant advantages to both landscape contractors and their customers. Installing big rolls provides the most durable and visually appealing instant turf possible, all in a minimum amount of time. For landscape contractors with the equipment and training to install big rolls, any size job is possible, from the smaller residential lawns, to commercial parks and sports fields. And, customers will appreciate their more professionally finished lawn.

## STEP 1 — Equipment & Training

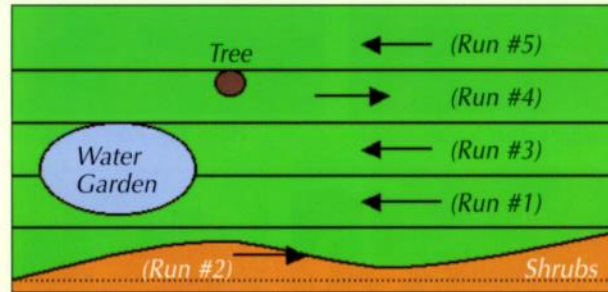
Big roll turf installation can appear deceptively easy in manufacturers' demo tapes or when watching an experienced crew in action. There is a steep learning curve in acquiring proficiency in big roll installation; however it can become just as easy as it looks if the installation crew has the proper training and equipment, and is willing to learn through experience. Landscape contractors should expect several on-site training sessions before tackling a big roll job alone. Depending on experience and the type of equipment, it's not unusual for a three-person team to lay 500 square yards (418 m<sup>2</sup>) of big roll turf in two hours. Under ideal conditions, 2,000 square yards (1,672 m<sup>2</sup>) in two hours has been documented.

Where do you begin? Generally, the best single source for big roll installation equipment and training is your local turf producers who have big roll capability. Because harvesting big rolls allows them to harvest more turf quicker, they sometimes provide their landscape contractor customers with initial training, at little or no charge. Another source is the big roll installation equipment dealer.



## STEP 2 — Measuring & Ordering

It's a good idea to begin by sketching the planned installation site's layout on a sheet of paper. In addition to approximate location and shape of buildings, driveways, trees and bushes, as well as any uneven terrain, you may want to diagram the direction in which the big rolls will be laid. The sketch will serve as an excellent reference for computing the number of big rolls needed and, later, in directing your installation teams.



*Here is an example of a big roll installation pattern with some typical challenges, including landscaped areas with curves and ovals, and a small tree.*

## STEP 3 — Soil Preparation

For best results, follow the standard soil prep procedures for any other type of turf. Detailed instructions are available in the Turfgrass Producers International's brochure "Turf Installation Guide".

## STEP 4 — Delivery

When ordering big rolls, it is important for the landscape contractor and producer to set a mutually agreed upon delivery time that both parties consider absolute. The date and time should allow for the contractor to assemble his crew and prep the soil for installation. For the producer, it should allow ample time to harvest the big rolls, load them and any necessary installation equipment



onto the truck, and—ideally—arrive at the job site just as the ground prep is being completed.

When being unloaded, the big rolls need to be placed with consideration for the maximum number of long runs and as close as possible to where each new roll will begin, with the rolls' flaps turned in the proper direction for quick pick-up by the turf laying installer.

## STEP 5 — Installation

The efficiency of a big roll installation's crew depends upon the team leader's problem-solving ability. Each job site presents new challenges such as slopes, non-turf areas, obstacles (trees, ponds and patios) and laying patterns.

The usual big roll installation team is made up of three people: one person operates the installer, another follows closely behind with a rake to pull the laid portion of the roll into alignment, and the third person is trimming around trees, shrubs and other non-grass areas, or patching a roll's occasional weak spot or hole.

During the initial learning process, it's not unusual for the installation of big rolls to take as long as laying standard rolls covering the same area. Learning to deal quickly and efficiently with the inevitable variables is where experience will make a significant difference as the learning process evolves.

*Suggestion:* Maintain production records of each project—square yards (m<sup>2</sup>) of turf laid, number of hours and workers, degree of difficulty, etc. and translate this information into productivity per person, per hour, etc. for use in bidding future jobs. This information can also serve as the basis for creating a team incentive program to encourage increased productivity, eventually helping maximize the square yards (m<sup>2</sup>) that can be billed per season.

Newly laid big roll turf will need to be watered—about one inch (.25mm)—as soon as installation is complete.

