

Little at Large

I'VE just finished laying a new lawn and turfing is one of my favourite jobs.

Nothing in gardening can quite match that instant effect. A new lawn looks green, lush, vibrant and brings any garden to life.

Seeding is cheaper but, apart from taking a lot longer for the effect to materialise, it is very much weather dependant.

Autumn and spring are the seasons for sowing whereas turf can be laid almost all year round, provided the soil is not frozen or waterlogged and the new lawn is kept watered during dry spells.

Buying turf can be a tricky business as there are hundreds of turf producers and the quality can vary from field to field and from week to week depending on the weather.

Turf comes in different grades, which will require different maintenance, so before buying it you should decide what type of lawn you want, if purely ornamental or hard wearing if you have children.

There are also a few points you should look out for.

Turf should be able to withstand a bit of pushing and pulling to fit it. Good quality turf holds together when handled



**Garden talk by
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whereas poor quality will tear easily.

Each roll should be of even thickness, from 2.5 to 3.5cm. They should also all be the same width and length.

No weeds should be present and the grass should be uniform, with no obviously coarse grass or flower stalks.

It should also have been cut just before lifting.

If you turn a roll over, the soil should be a good loam with no large stones and reasonably moist. Large stones weaken the turf and may also work through the surface over time.

The turf should be fresh and green.

Reject any turf that has dried out or is starting to go yellow.

When your turf is delivered, you should lay it as soon as possible.

If you can't, stack it in a cool place where, in the summer, it should last for another day. To store it any longer, unroll and keep well watered.

Just remember that each roll is heavy to carry so at delivery, if at all possible, have it dropped as close as you can to the area you are intending to turf.

Happy gardening.

Martin Little