

BIG ROLL TURF LAYING – HOW IT WORKS AND WHAT PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE

For landscaping situations we offer turf in three **big roll** formats:-

1. **Standard Big Rolls** 74cm wide x 27.2m long (20 sq m in area) x normal turf soil depth. Weight is variable depending upon moisture content but around 250-350kg per roll
To lay these we offer two types of laying equipment:-

The first is a **hand operated trolley** which has two low ground pressure wheels and tyres. The roll is loaded onto the trolley, by placing the axle bar through the core of the turf roll. The trolley is guided into the roll with the two lift arms under the projecting ends of the axles and the roll is lifted off the ground by pulling down on the trolley handle, just like a long lever. The roll is transported to the area where it is to be laid by pulling the trolley along (two men make this a bit easier). Once at the area, the first two or three metres can be unwound from the roll by a third man, who stands on this turf whilst the two pullers move backwards with the roll. Once the whole roll has been laid then the next operation is to lift up one end of the turf and pull the support netting out to one side, then walking down the laid turf gradually pull the whole net away and out. The next roll is laid in exactly the same way, but laying the turf a few centimetres away from the first roll. A crew member can then pull the turf into close edge contact with the first roll by the use of a steel pronged landscaper rake, which he drops onto the turf surface, spiking it and easily pulling towards him.

The second method of laying the 20 sq m big roll is with a **tractor-mounted frame**. This is basically a steel frame which fits onto the three-point linkage of a 20 to 30 hp tractor. Ideally the tractor would have low ground-pressure tyres fitted as one wheel will be running on the previously laid turf. Soil conditions need to be good and firm to enable the tractor and frame + roll of turf to pass over the soil without marking it - hence laying in dry conditions is recommended with plenty of irrigation immediately afterwards.

2. **Rolls 1.25m wide x 28m long** (35 sq m in area) x normal turf depth. Weight is variable depending on moisture content but around 500-650kg per roll.

These are operated in the same way as the smaller tractor-mounted laying frame. The rolls are loaded onto the laying frame, by removing the steel axle shaft and inserting it into the core of the turf. The tractor is reversed with the frame arms straddling the turf roll and below the height of the axle. Once in position, carefully lift the frame with the tractor's three-point linkage controls until the roll of turf is clear of the ground. Drive and manoeuvre the tractor to the laying area. An operative unwinds two to three metres of turf by hand and stands on the turf to offer resistance to the roll when the tractor drives forward. As the roll is gradually unrolled, it will have a large clearance between it and the ground as the roll diameter decreases, so it is advisable for the tractor driver to lower the roll gradually as laying progresses. A tractor with at least 40hp will be required, again preferably with low ground pressure tyres. This laying frame can be offset to one side to aid laying.

IMPORTANT NOTES for THOSE LAYING BIG ROLL:-

Avoid laying in very warm weather - certainly never above 19 degrees C. The danger is that the grass in the roll of turf will start to heat excessively due to microbial action, resulting in damage to the turf. This is doubly applicable to big roll turf.

All turf should be laid on the day of delivery and as soon as possible after arrival on site. Never order more turf than you are able to lay in a day.

All turf should be irrigated copiously as soon as possible after laying. On large areas, start irrigating the mornings laying whilst laying the later turf.

When unloading the turf from the delivery lorry and placing in the holding area prior to laying, make sure that the flap on each roll of turf is facing the right way round for picking up by the tractor frame or trolley. This will help the workflow greatly.

Once the laying frame has been attached to the tractor, tighten the tractor's lower linkage arms to reduce any side play to a minimum. This is particularly important with uneven ground conditions as the weight of the roll slewing sideways could cause the tractor to tip over.

Apart from the operative who unwinds some turf at the start of a run and stands on the turf, no one apart from the driver should be near the tractor and laying frame whilst it is in motion.



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