



California Native Sod

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the term “California Native” really mean?

California Native refers to plants and grasses that grew in our region without human intervention since *before European settlement*. They have been in decline due to pressures from urban development, agriculture, recreation and invasive, non-native species.

Why are native plants important?

Native plants and grasses provide powerful benefits to you and our environment. Because native grasses are adapted to survive in almost any soil condition, they require little to no inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and use significantly less water. Native plants do the best job of providing food and shelter to beneficial insects, butterflies, ladybugs and wildlife.

Our lawns have become a major player in our ecosystem, landscaping with native grasses is a wise environmental decision. California native turf generates oxygen for the atmosphere and cleans the air of toxic gaseous pollutants.

Why are the benefits of California Native Sod as compared to Traditional Turfgrass?

- ❖ **Save Water** - Once established, California Native Sod uses **50% Less Water** than traditional turf.
- ❖ **Low Maintenance** - The desired appearance and projected use of your sod area will determine the mowing height and frequency. Creating meadows in your landscape means you can look forward to infrequent, seasonal or no mowing, reduced fertilization, little to no pesticides and less of your time.
- ❖ **Environmental Benefits** - Native grasses control soil erosion, reduce dust, they lower and cool ground temperatures, reduce noise and clean our ground water. Properly maintained sod is one of the most cost effective and environmentally beneficial products in urban development.

Which California Native Sod is most commonly used as a mowed lawn replacement?

Native Bentgrass™ is the first choice for a traditional lawn replacement. It provides modest recovery from low impact foot traffic. The dark green turf mat can be mowed at a 2 to 4 inches height.

Native Mow Free™ is versatile and adaptable to different mow heights. Our most shade tolerant offering, this slow growing, fine textured grass can be mowed at 4 to 6 inches or left un-mowed to create a beautiful garden meadow.

Delta Grasslands Mix™ has an emerald green color with hairy fine leaf texture. Commonly used on rooftop gardens and infrequently mowed meadows, this grass can be mowed at 4 to 6 inches or left un-mowed to create a European Scottish Links design in your landscape.

How much do I need to water my new California Native Sod?

New sod whether California Native or traditional turfgrass, will require adequate moisture until the roots have become established. Short and frequent irrigation should be applied in the first seven to fourteen days depending on the time of year and your environment. On day one, enough water should be applied to penetrate the sod and two inches of the native soil. Applying too much water will rob the roots of oxygen and in warmer weather can possibly lead to disease. Not applying enough water can cause the new sod to dry out. This can cause the sod rolls to brown around the edges and the sod rolls to shrink. Should this occur increase irrigation time to provide adequate moisture to the turf. Once the sod has knitted down all irrigation should be applied between midnight and 4:00 am. The number of minutes will depend on your irrigation output. Installing California Native Sod during the Fall and Winter months allows natural rainfall to assist in the establishment of the new sod.

Why does California Native Sod require less water?

The grass species within these California Native Sod mixes have been specifically chosen for their drought tolerant attributes. They have evolved to live within California's diverse Mediterranean climate and varying soil types. Once fully established, water seeking roots can often reach a depth of 48 inches making the sod more drought tolerant and giving it superior overall resilience. California Native Sod is the most environmentally responsible sod available!

How much do I need to fertilize my California Native Sod?

Upon installation, apply a pre-plant starter fertilizer directly under the sod. These California Native grasses do not respond to fertilizer the same way as traditional turfgrass. They require less than half the amount of nitrogen this is commonly applied to traditional turfgrass. Apply fertilizer in the early fall before the heavy rains arrive. Follow with an early spring (late February or early March) application. A third application may be necessary in the late spring or early summer depending on nutrient levels of your native soil. Watch for signs of low fertility, uneven growth and loss of color are a good indication that an area needs fertilizer.

What is the maintenance recommendation for California Native Sod?

The maintenance of California Native Sod varies depending on the variety you choose and your desired aesthetic. Each of the native sod offerings can be mowed or left non-mowed. Garden pathways and designated play meadows can be mowed into the grass area to allow foot traffic and greater accessibility throughout the landscape. It is best to determine the desired aesthetic and remain consistent with the maintenance program to maintain the look you prefer.

Important features of these grasses are:

- ❖ California Native Sod installed and desired to provide a conventional lawn aesthetic will require weekly consistent mowing.
- ❖ Non-Mowed grass areas will produce a seed head in the Spring. This is often mistaken as a weed invasion. If desired, the seed heads can be cut off with a string trimmer. Left alone, these beautiful flowers of the grass blow in the wind providing a seasonal splendor for which California is famous. Summer heat will turn the seed heads golden brown and causing them to eventually cascade over and grass cycle and mulch into the green grass below.
- ❖ Should you wish to convert a non-mowed area to mowed, it is important that the area be cut back gradually. You should never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade during cutting. When these grasses reach full maturity they fall over on themselves and shade out areas below. Cutting the grass will reveal these areas and may be unsightly. Well timed mowing in the early Spring will ensure that these grasses recover and fill back into the open spaces.
- ❖ It is important to remember that “Low Maintenance” does NOT mean “No Maintenance”