



Creating Drought Tolerant Landscapes

Step 2: Methods for Removing Grass

Grasses are very hardy plants, so removing them can be a challenge. A reasonable expectation is that at least a little will reappear no matter what method of removal is chosen. When choosing a method, some factors to consider include available time, time of the year, and whether or not you would like to use an herbicide. Each method has advantages and disadvantages. It is up to you to choose the method that will be the best for you.

The first method is **“Composting in Place”**. It involves blocking sunlight to the plants (cutting off the food source), and composting the grass in place, without removing it. It is an organic method that does not use chemicals, but it can be a slow process, especially during cooler months when the grass is not growing rapidly.

Step 1: Mow the grass short and lightly wet the area. Next, apply a thick layer of newspaper or cardboard. Make sure the edges overlap so no light can leak through.



Step 2: Apply a layer of organic mulch, such as 6 to 8 inches of thick wood chips, over the newspaper/cardboard.



Step 3: Moisten lightly 1 time per week to keep the composting process active.

The second method involves applying an **herbicide** and physically removing the dead grass. This is a much quicker method (weeks instead of months), but like composting in place this process is slower during cooler months. There are also organic herbicides available, but usually they require multiple applications to get satisfactory results.

Step 1: Choose an herbicide that is “non selective” (meaning it will work on all types of grasses and weeds), and that is “systemic” (meaning it will be absorbed by the plant and then move to all the plant parts, including the roots).

Step 2: Apply the herbicide according to the label. Consider using a Ready-to-Use product that is already pre mixed.

Step 3: Remove grass once it has died. Depending on the time of the year, you may have to wait between 4 days and 21 days for the grass to die. It is important to get as much of the grass as possible. A “Sod Cutter” is a machine that can be rented and will cut the grass about ½” below the surface of the soil and allow the grass to be removed in pieces.



It is very important to mark all items in the turf area that you do not want to damage i.e. sprinkler heads before you remove the grass.

Disposal of Grass

Dead grass that has soil attached is not considered a green waste and should not be put into the green waste recycling container.