

Big Roll Installation Guide

Instructions for printing the following two pages as a two-sided brochure:

The “*Big Roll Installation Guide*” is offered in three versions:

- 1) High-resolution, full-color version members can present to their commercial printing company to produce larger quantities
- 2) Low-resolution version that will produce a quality copy from home laser and inkjet printers
- 3) Low-resolution version without the color background so it can be printed and faxed without losing readability

Each version of the *Big Roll* brochure file has two pages (with three panels each) for printing the front and the back side of the brochure into a two-sided brochure on 8.5-in. by 11-in. paper.

For Laser Printers:

- A- Print the following PDF page (the 3 front panels of the gate-fold brochure)
- B- Insert the printed page back into the printer—printed side up—and print the last PDF page (the 3 back panels of the brochure)
- C- Fold the resulting two-sided printed paper twice to form a brochure with the title “Big Roll Installation Guide” as the outside-front panel

For Inkjet Printers—by design, Inkjet printers print the pages off-center, resulting in a narrow margins at one end of the paper and a wide margin at the other end. To remedy this problem, follow these steps:

- A- Print the following PDF page, trim the wide margin to match the width of the narrow margin at the page’s opposite end
- B- Place the trimmed printed page back into the printer—printed side up—and print the last PDF page
- C- Fold the resulting two-sided printed paper twice to form a brochure with the title “Big Roll Installation Guide” as the outside-front panel

Because of the speed at which big rolls can be laid, it is sometimes wise to begin watering the first acre (0.4 hectare) or two while continuing additional installation. Provisions should be made for it to be watered daily—depending on the weather—until it becomes firmly rooted (about two weeks), then begin less frequent and then deeper watering.

Equipment Options

Initially, the big roll installation crew will become familiar with one or perhaps two types of big roll installers, depending on what the equipment dealer or producer has available. After gaining experience, the contractor may decide to invest in his own big roll installation equipment in order to take on bigger jobs more often.

Big roll installers come in a wide variety of designs, sizes and price ranges. Among the options are: a three-point tractor attachment; hydraulic hook-up units; walk-behind, self-propelled units; and riding units with features ranging from fully automatic capabilities, two- or four-wheel drive, to crawler tracks, harvester/installer combination and many different types of attachments. Prices range from \$400 (U.S.) to upwards of \$35,000 (U.S.).

Safety First

Safety is extremely important. Big rolls can weigh from 700 to 2,000 lbs. (318-907 kg), depending on moisture content, thickness, width and length of the turf cut. Unloading and moving big rolls requires the use of a fork-lift, skid-steer or front-end loader capable of safely and efficiently handling such loads.

Installing or moving big rolls over uneven, especially steep, terrain requires extra caution to prevent rolling over. Be sure to read and follow the equipment manufacturer's owner's manual for safe operating instructions.

For more information, visit the website www.TurfGrassSod.org. Click on **Find a Professional** which takes you to the TPI Membership Directory. To locate a turfgrass producer near you who harvests big rolls, go to **Turf Cuts** and (using the pull-down menu) select **Big Roll**. Go to **Member Type** and select **Producers**. Go to **U.S. State** and select the appropriate **state** (for non-U.S., go to **Country** and key in appropriate country), and then **Search**. For big roll installation equipment, go back to the TPI Membership Directory page to **Turf Products**. Using the pull-down menu, select **Sod Installer**. Go to **Member Type** and select **Manufacturers/Suppliers**, and then **Search**.

Photos are courtesy of
TPI Member companies



Miller's Turf Super 2000



WMI Big Roll Installer



Bucyrus Magnum 136A



Brouwer SIH 2400



Brouwer SPI 2430



Brouwer Rollmate

Turf Big Roll Installation Guide

Big Roll Benefits to Landscape Contractors

From interviews with professional landscape contractors (each with six to nine years experience installing big rolls) came the following list of Big Roll Installation Benefits:

- **Increases profitability**—allows taking on more and bigger turf installation jobs without increasing the number of work hours per year
- **Requires less workers**—half (or less) the number of workers are needed, compared to installing standard rolls or slabs
- **Reduces physical labor**—changes turf installation from an all manual task to a mostly mechanical process requiring significantly less physical ability (workers are more likely to show up the next day)
- **Results in better looking finished product**—fewer seams, trimming or edges drying out, fewer cracks for weeds to grow through
- **Enhances landscape contractor/turf producer relationship**—the necessary cooperative effort increases the mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's needs
- **Allows almost immediate use of athletic and sports fields**—thicker and wider cuts, and less seams provide established playing field in minimum time



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

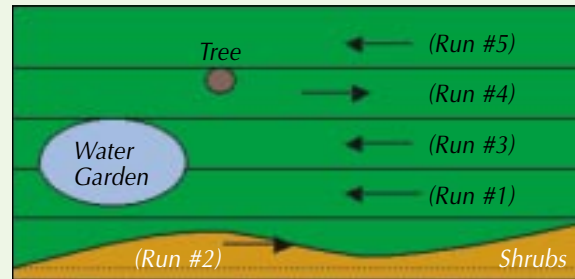
Big roll turf installation can appear deceptively easy in manufacturers' demo tapes or when watching an experienced crew in action. There is a steep learning curve in acquiring proficiency in big roll installation; however it can become just as easy as it looks if the installation crew has the proper 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 m²) of big roll turf in two hours. Under ideal conditions, 2,000 square yards (1,672 m²) 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 (m²) 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 (m²) 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.

