

Fight the Lawn & Win

(Turf Removal & Site Preparation)

What are the potential benefits?



- Water Conservation
- Time & Money Savings
- Environmental Concerns
- Habitat Improvement

How do I remove turf?

- Solarization
- Sheet Composting
- Physical Removal
- Herbicides



Solarization



Cover grass with black plastic until it dies (usually takes 1 to 2 months), remove the plastic, and leave the dead grass to compost in place

Benefits: easy, inexpensive, & minimal environmental impact

Downside: kills insects & other soil organisms, can be unsightly, plastic is not biodegradable

Sheet Composting



Mow the lawn low, cover with cardboard (be sure to overlap), wet down, add a layer of compost, add 4" of mulch

Benefits: organic addition, minimal labor, no disposal/removal of turf, environmentally friendly

Downside: may require lots of cardboard, takes a longer time, impractical on slopes

Physical Removal



Rent or borrow a sod cutter, roll up the strips, remove turf, cover soil with newspaper, add 4" compost and 3" mulch

Benefits: quick, creates good soil, prevents grass re-growth

Downside: won't work for Bermuda grass, labor intensive, removes organic matter

Herbicides

Choose an appropriate product & carefully follow the directions on the label (make sure it is only for grasses & not broad-leaf plants)

Benefits: can be simple & quick for people familiar with herbicide use

Downside: risks injuring or killing nearby plants, can harm beneficial insects, can cause personal injury, runoff pollution

The Lawn's Gone - What do I do now?

- Replace lawn with native sedges or bunch grasses
- Replace lawn with native meadow (wildflowers, grasses and native shrubs)
- Replace lawn with 1/2 grasses, 1/2 native meadow
- Replace lawn with new landscape using water-wise plants and grasses and mulch



Sources:

Taylor Lewis - Cornflower Farms (www.cornflowerfarms.com)

Sonoma County Master Gardeners - Grass Removal Methods (ucanr.edu/sites/scmg/Lawn_Replacement)

