



FUNCTION OF MOWING

Mowing is a fundamental cultural practice in turf management. Regular mowing is essential to produce an acceptable turf surface for any type of use. Mowing has a major influence on turf quality. Good mowing practices will enhance the density, texture, colour, root development and wear tolerance of turf.

Turf grasses are well adapted to mowing. The growing points are located close to ground level, in the crown of the plant, on stolons and rhizomes and at the base of leaf blades. The oldest parts of the leaf blades are the tips. This allows the mower to cut away the leaf tips, without impeding leaf growth or stopping the development of new leaves.

However, mowing does alter the natural condition of the plant. Each mow removes some of the leaf area that is necessary for food production through photosynthesis. Cutting the leaf blade also inflicts damage that may leave the turf prone to disease and other stresses.

The type of turf use and the growth rate are the major factors that influence the mowing height and frequency. These will change throughout the year

and the turf manager must adjust mowing practices accordingly.

The mowing requirement also will vary from site to site.

TYPES OF MOWERS

A number of factors need considering to select the right mowing equipment, such as the quality of cut required, the terrain and the size of the area that has to be mowed.

The type and size of mowing equipment has to be matched to each different turf situation. For example, on fine turf playing fields the mower is required to deliver a smooth, low cut and high quality finish. On passive parks, the mower has to provide a neat, higher cut finish and handle rough and variable terrain with sticks, rocks and exposed tree roots on the surface. It is not possible for one type of mower to work effectively in both situations.

Mowing is also a very labour intensive practice. Mowers must have the capacity to cover the required area within an acceptable time frame, to provide the most efficient use of labour. For example, mowing broad-area turf using a ride-on 'out-front' rotary mower is not as efficient as a gang mower.