

Botanical name

C.dactylon x C.transvaalensis

Position

Best grown in full sun. Will tolerate up to 20% shade.

Mowing

- Mow every 7-10 days in the hot months; every 3-6 weeks in the cold months
- Mowing height: 10-20mm if grown in full sun, 20-30mm if grown in part shade
- Sharpen mower blades frequently
- Allow to grow to maximum length during the cooler months to maintain colour and vigour.

Watering

It is essential that instant turf is laid on moist soil. Then it's important to water the turf in soon after laying to prevent it from drying out. Watering should wet the sod and the top 30-50 mm of soil. The turf needs to be kept moist over the first few days after laying.

After the root system is fully established, water thoroughly only when required:

Once every 7-10 days during warm or hot summer weather (more often on sandy soils), and much less in cooler months.

Remember that infrequent, deep watering promotes a healthy lawn by encouraging the knitting of the turf sod to the soil. Over-watering can be a problem because it encourages excessive growth, disease and root rot.

Guide to watering your new lawn

1. Root initiation and development - typically the first week

The turf may require watering three times a day for the first week, depending on the temperature, relative humidity, and wind.

2. Soil/root system establishment - typically the second week

Water every second day, and every day if hot and dry, to keep the turf moist.

3. Third and fourth weeks

Water less frequently, reducing to twice a week by the fourth week. Only water more on hot and dry days.

Fertilising

For best results use a slow-release fertiliser three times per year (early spring, mid-summer and late autumn). In the heat of summer avoid over-fertilising or using manure-based products.

If you need a quick green up, use a liquid fertiliser high in nitrogen to promote a lush green lawn.

Do not use weed-and-feed fertilisers unless otherwise stated on product back panel.

Spraying

Tolerant to many off-the-shelf weed, pest and disease sprays. See manufacturers' instructions for full details.

Availability

Santa Ana Couch is offered for sale year-round. However, establishment during the winter months (or un-seasonally cold weather) is not ideal and carries certain risks and challenges such as:

- The grass will be very slow to establish a new root system.
- The grass will deteriorate without direct sunlight.
- The grass will deteriorate if kept saturated.
- The grass is dormant - it will not be active and will lack green colour.
- The grass will not sustain or recover from repeated use.
- The grass will become active when air and soil temperatures rise.

Santa Ana Couch is best installed between September and April.

Leaf structure

- Internode length: 50.4mm
- Leaf width: 6.4mm average
- Leaf length: 20.2mm average
- Leaf colour: RHS 137A. Pale green to yellow dormancy depending on local conditions

Root structure

- Extremely deep rooted.
- Will tolerate moderate salt levels.

Maintenance

Couch can be over-sown with Rye grass to improve colour and activity during the cooler months of dormancy.

Sports fields regularly undertake this practice, over-seeding the Rye grass in the autumn and renovating it out in the spring. The Rye grass will protect the underlying warm seasons grass from damage.

The Rye grass will stress in the warmer months unless watered. The underlying drought-tolerant Couch will therefore persist better in the warmer months. Low mowing will also encourage the Couch to out-compete the Rye grass as it will stress and expose the underlying Couch to sunlight.

The hybrid Santa Ana was derived from the crossing of *C.dactylon* and *C.transvaalensis* the latter selected because it rarely produces viable seed thus making it less invasive.

Thickness of sod

Approx. 25mm