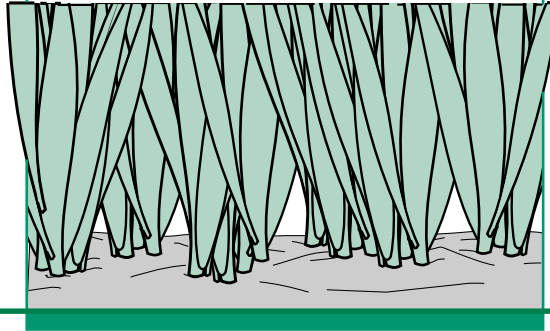


WATERING YOUR LAWN

Turfgrass



Today, water conservation is an important issue, and in urban areas, mismanaged home lawns can be big users of water. Trying to maintain a lawn at the peak of perfection at all times, especially during the summer, is not only a waste of water but is bad for the grass and increases pest problems. Through efficient use, water consumption may be reduced by up to 50 percent, with only a 10 percent reduction in turf quality. This quality reduction is hardly noticeable. Positive effects include less mowing and fewer weeds, diseases and insects.

Here are some water conservation goals for lawns. Maintain attractive, healthy turf with less water. Establish zero water runoff from turf irrigation. No water loss from soaking soil below the root zone. Sustain water when evaporation loss from heat and wind is low. Follow cultural practices that conserve water. Use water conserving grasses

Seven factors affect lawn watering. These include warm or cool-season grasses. Weather — temperature, humidity, sun, rain, wind. Soil, including sand, clay, loam or compacted soil. Sunny or shady areas. Seasons—shorter days and cooler temperatures, like Spring and Fall. Longer days and hotter temperatures, like Summer. Amount of fertilizer applied. Mowing height. The slope of the yard is also a factor.

Use the following practices to conserve water. Water only when lawn shows signs of needing water. Water in the morning. Water slowly so all water is absorbed, no runoff. Direct the water only onto the turf.

Use sprinklers that produce drops of water. Soak soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. Stop watering at least 30 minutes before sundown. Start water conserving practices at the beginning of the season. Water as infrequently as possible without stressing the grass. Don't practice shallow, frequent watering. Don't water paved walks, drives, and streets. Don't water with a fine mist spray. Don't water in high winds. Don't mow grass short. Don't fertilize excessively.

Water According to the Weather

Water Less	Water More
Cooler temperatures	High temperatures
Cloudy or overcast	Bright sunlight
Low wind	High wind
High humidity	Low humidity
Rain or showers	No rain

How Often to Water

How often to water depends on the weather, grass species, soil type, season, shade, fertilization practices, mowing height and slope. Weather is the main factor in determining how often to water. Weather changes with the season and often varies considerably from year to year. Adjust watering frequency according to the weather and not a calendar schedule.

Use the "soak and wait" method of watering. Soak the soil to the depth of the root zone, then wait as long as possible before watering again. Watch for signs that the turf needs water, such as a darker bluish-green color or footprints remaining in the turf. Do not wait until the turf severely wilts. Sandy soils will have to be watered more frequently than loam or clay soils.