

LOVE THY YARD!

Watering your yard

It's impossible for me to give you a perfect daily watering schedule on how frequently to irrigate your lawn. We live in a high altitude desert. With this type of dry weather we tend to get low levels of moisture each year. Our lawns do grow but they need **WATER**. And where do you think this water comes from? You are right...from you watering it and paying for it.

- ❖ Determining when to water is much easier if you let the grass tell you. When grass starts to wilt, leaf blades begin to fold and footprints remain visible long after they have been made then it is time to water!
- ❖ It is critical for you to determine if enough water is applied to wet the entire root zone to have nice green grass and flowering plants. That plays a major factor in determining how deep a root system will grow. Giving the lawn a quick drink every day or so only waters the surface soil. You need to go a bit deeper than that.
- ❖ Infrequent irrigation for longer periods of time allows the water to reach a depth of 4 to 6 inches. This encourages deep root growth and healthy turf able to handle periods of drought.
- ❖ Including rainfall, **lawns need an inch or two of water per week to thrive**. Using a rain gauge will help determine how much additional watering will be required.
- ❖ **The best time for the irrigation system to water the yard is in the early morning**. Watering early in the morning makes the water stay on the turf longer than normal. Early dew that normally forms on grass early in the morning washes off any airborne disease spores. As the sun rises the leaves or grass blades can dry quickly.
- ❖ Also early in the morning the air is usually calm and evaporation is low. Irrigation timers make the task easy of turning on the sprinkler system early in the morning and moving to each zone in the system. For homeowners with the convenience of an irrigation timer they will need to turn the sprinkler system on and **finish watering before 9:00 am**.

Fertilizing Your Grass

- ❖ Most yards would do fine if the grass received at least one application per year. If you apply 2 to 4 fertilizer applications throughout the year the turf should experience lush growth. A quick walk through the garden center and you'll discover a wide selection of brands and formulations. Before applying any fertilizer to your yard, make sure you've read the label and selected the right formulation for the grass. Also follow the label and do not over fertilize or your grass will have brown patches showing fertilization burn.
- ❖ If you're going for only one fertilization application per year then fertilize in the spring with warm season grasses or in the fall for cool season grasses.
- ❖ When applying fertilizer make your applications when the turf is **dry**. After pushing the fertilizer spreader around the yard, turn on the irrigation. The sprinklers will help move the fertilizer nutrients into the soil and down to the root system. Plus it keeps the fertilizer from sitting on the grass blades which can burn the lawn.
- ❖ Mowing grass at the proper height increases the yards ability to combat weeds. Grass that is mowed short is less dense and weakens the roots system. In contrast, a healthy, thick lawn helps prevent weeds from establishing themselves.
- ❖ Mowing grass at the proper height in shady areas is very important due to the limited sunlight. The "turf management practice" of mowing grass too low and scalping areas with a weed eater is probably the ruin of more lawns than many of us care to believe.

Weeds

- ❖ If your yard does not have many weeds the easiest way to control them is by pulling them by hand. The important part in hand weeding is to make sure the entire plant is removed: the plant, roots, and runners to prevent spreading.
- ❖ For heavier weed infestations chemical applications may be required. If you feel comfortable using weed killer or herbicides apply pre-emergence herbicides in the spring or fall to stop weed seeds from sprouting.
- ❖ For broadleaf weeds like clovers and dandelions a post-emergence weed killer will be required. These can be applied as a spray or incorporated with a fertilizer as a weed-n-feed product.

Miscellaneous Grass Info

Crabgrass and dollar weeds do well in wet conditions. Bahia and St. Augustine grasses don't do well in wet conditions. This makes for a great combination of grass and weeds. The grass becomes weak and the weeds are in a perfect environment to grow and take over then start their journey to begin choking out the weak turf.

Four Cultural or Environmental Conditions For Killing Grass

- Excessive Moisture
- Inadequate Moisture
- Insufficient Sunlight
- Mowing Turf too Low
- **Aerating and Dethatching**
 - Even the healthy green grass on the course can benefit from a good aerating.
 - Aerators punch small holes into the lawn allowing for moisture and air to penetrate the soil. Core aerators which can be rented at many garden centers removes plugs of soil. The plugs decompose while sitting on top of the lawn. Of course on gold courses they remove the plugs as golfers are not fond of the problems they cause to their golf score!
 - Before aerating your lawn make sure it has been well watered. Fertilizer is best applied when the grass is actively growing. Aerating is also best done when the grasses root system is actively growing also