

Watering Your Lawn Properly



Proper irrigation is a key ingredient for achieving a healthy lawn. It's pretty basic.....plants need water to survive, and to be healthy and grow. We can use the greatest fertilizer and weed-control products, and apply them properly. We can have the best Technicians out to your property. But without watering, our service is not going to be nearly as effective. All of our treatments, either pre-emergent or fertilizers, will need to be watered into the soil within a few days to be most effective. So please follow these guidelines to help us out.

- **Water Deep, but Infrequently.**

Apply enough water with each irrigation to wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches. This generally takes about a 1/2 inch of water applied with each irrigation. Depending upon the type of soil that you have—and your irrigation system—this may mean irrigating each section of turf for about 20-30 minutes. The best way to really determine this is to set out a few cans in your lawn, and see how long it takes to apply 1/2 inch of water. Most people will be surprised as to how long it takes, unless your water pressure is really good. With clay soils (or if your turf is on a slope) you may have to run through the irrigation cycle twice, allowing the water to soak into the soil slowly. Do not water every day, and do not hand water because you'll only be wetting the surface of the soil. Hand watering your lawn trains the roots of your turf to stay shallow at the surface, becoming dependent upon more frequent watering. Go ahead and let the top surface dry out some; as long as there is still deeper soil moisture, the roots will grow deep to find that moisture which leads to a more drought-tolerant turf. Most turf grasses need about 1.5 inches of water per week—either from rainfall or from irrigation. So without any help from Mother Nature, and applying 1/2 inch of water with each irrigation, that translates to 3 times per week on your irrigation. Other than in the dead of summer, we'll generally receive a rainfall per week on average, so we recommend to usually water twice per week, and then manually turn it on if it dries out.

- **Water Early in the Morning**

The best time to irrigate is early in the morning, so that water can move into the soil, and the turf surface will dry out as the sun comes up in the morning. So if you have an irrigation system, you should set it to come on around 4:00 am so it will finish up at sunrise. Your LawnAmerica guy will appreciate this also, so that the sprinkler does not come on while he is applying your treatment! If you water in the evening, as some homeowners do, the turf will stay damp all night, leading to an increased chance of turf disease such as brown patch in fescue. If you water during the afternoon on a hot day, a good portion of that water will just evaporate and be wasted. Every lawn is different with different soil types, turf types, etc. Cool-season turf such as fescue will require more water during the heat of summer. Bermudagrass is more heat and drought tolerant, but still needs water to grow and look good. Sandy soils will dry out quicker than clay or loamy soils, so you'll need to irrigate more frequently with them. If we get into one of our monsoon periods, turn off your sprinkler system. And when we experience drought like we had in the summer of 2011 and 2012, then you'll need to irrigate even more than 1.5 inches of water per week, since the turf will be using more and the heat will evaporate the water from the soil more quickly.