



# When and How to Water Your Sod



## 1. Warm and cool-season grasses

- Warm season grasses (Bermuda and Zoysia) require less water than cool season grass. They use less water during the high water use summer months and only a small amount during the spring and fall.
- Cool season grasses (Fescue) green up earlier in the spring and stay green later in the fall. However, a longer growing season means a longer watering season. More water is needed for cool season grasses during the peak water-use summer months to maintain a quality appearance.

## 2. Weather

- Sunny areas generally need more water than shady areas because sunny areas have a higher evaporation rate. Since shady areas have less evaporation, it is important not to over water them. See 'Water According to the Weather' chart on the following page.

## 3. Soil Conditions

- Clay soils are the most difficult to water. Clay compacts easily, resulting in poor water penetration and root growth. Clay soils compacted during house construction should be replaced with 6 to 8 inches of sandy loam topsoil. Although clay holds the most water, the pores are small and lack air for root growth when too wet. Species such as tall Fescue root deeply in good soil and have good drought resistance, but will not be as drought resistant in a shallow, clay soil.
- A sandy loam is the ideal soil for growing turf. It has good water penetration, drainage and water-holding capacity. Roots grow deep in these soils, making a quality, easy-to-manage turf.
- Sandy soils absorb water quickly and drain well, but don't hold much water. These soils require more frequent watering but less water per application. Although roots grow deep in sandy soil, it can be difficult to establish grass from seed in sandy soil.

## 4. When to water

- Certain times of the day are preferred for irrigation. Morning is the most efficient time to water because it is cooler and less evaporation occurs. Wind is less likely to be a problem during the morning hours. City water pressure is greater at this time than during the peak use time from 5pm to 10pm.
- Although not harmful to grass, mid afternoon watering is the least efficient time to water. Evaporation loss from high temperature, wind and low humidity is greatest during afternoon hours.
- Many people who work outside of the home begin watering after they get home from work and shut off the water at bedtime. Grass stays wet longer at night and is more likely to be infected by disease. If watering after work is the most convenient time, shut the water off 30 minutes before sundown to give the grass time to dry. Turf damaging fungus can develop in as little as 2 hours when a film of water remains on the grass. When watering at night, homeowners are also unlikely to notice problems such as water runoff, poor sprinkler coverage, water breaks, etc.
- The only exception to this is when the grass is severely wilting. At this time, it should be watered immediately regardless of the time of day or night. While turfgrass needs water for acceptable appearance during hot, dry weather, most turfgrass is over-watered rather than under-watered. The problems for over-watering are more numerous, serious and take longer to correct.

## 5. Fertilizer

- Fertilizer speeds up the growth process, thus requiring additional water. The more nitrogen is applied, the greater the water requirement.

## 6. Mowing Height

- Mow at the tallest recommended height for your species-this encourages deeper rooting. Deeper roots allow the grass or plant to take water from deeper in the soil, making for a more drought resistant plant.

## 7. Slope of the yard

Slopes are drier because of water runoff, especially at the top of a slope. The greater the slope, the greater reduction in the watering rate. Be free of suspended sand, soil, algae and other particles that clog the irrigation system. Home well-water samples should be tested for salt and sodium analysis.

## 9. Newly Seeded and Sodded Lawns

- The information contained in this publication is for established grass. Newly seeded or sodded lawns will require a light, frequent watering program.
  - After planting seed, the soil surface must be kept moist continuously until the seed germinates. But, because the seed does not produce roots until after germination, there is no need for deep soaking. When the grass is about 1 inch tall, begin to water less often but soak the soil deeper. Let the soil surface dry between waterings.
  - Although sod is mature grass, most of the root system is cut off during harvesting. Water sod immediately after it is laid and firmed into place. Water must go thru the sod and wet the soil. Lift the corner of a sod piece every few days, check that the soil is moist but not saturated. The challenge is to water often enough to keep the sod healthy but not so often enough that it doesn't root into the soil.
- Always use the "soak and wait" method of watering. Soak the soil to the depth of the root zone, then wait as long as possible for watering again.

### \* 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

Overstream Landscaping & Irrigation, Inc. takes great pride in our work and your individual needs. Based on our experience here in the local Charlotte area, we have composed this document as a *guideline* in caring for your yard.

Please note that throughout areas of town, the soil conditions change dramatically. Therefore, you will have to monitor your yard's individual level of absorption. The following recommendations will vary depending on:

- Warm or cool-season grass
- Weather
- Soil
- When to water
- Amount of fertilizer applied
- Mowing height
- Slope of the yard
- Use of city water or well water
- New seed or sod

We hope that this information will assist you in your quest for the 'perfect yard'.

## **Established Fescue Grass**

### **November thru Mid March**

- No water is necessary, as the irrigation system is winterized

### **Mid March thru Late May**

- Watering will be necessary usually every other day, 1 time per day
- Optimum watering time is between 4am and 1pm
- Rotor heads: 6-20 minutes using each zone
- Spray heads: 2-8 minutes using each zone

### **June thru Mid September**

- Watering is usually necessary 2 times per day everyday
- Optimum watering time is between 3am and 11am
- Rotor Heads: 3-10 minutes using each zone
- Spray Heads: 3-10 minutes using each zone

### **September thru Mid November**

- Watering is necessary once per day everyday
- Optimum watering time is between 4am and 1pm
- Rotor heads: 8-20 minutes using each zone
- Spray heads: 3-10 minutes using each zone

### **If the yard was newly seeded in the fall, watering is necessary 3 times per day thru the September and mid October months**

- Optimum watering times are 3am, 9am and 3pm
- Rotor heads: 6-12 minutes using each zone
- Spray heads: 2-7 minutes using each zone

## **Newly Sodded Yards**

Most times newly sodded yards will need more frequent watering but in shorter durations of time.

For example:

- Water a newly sodded yard 3 times per day for the first 5-10 days (3am, 9am and 1pm)
- Rotor zones: 10-35 minutes each time
- Spray zones: 5-15 minutes each time

After 10-14 days, cut the watering times back to the regular season schedule, but still watch the grass for over-drying and over-watered areas.

***\*\*Do not over-water new sod, it will die\*\****

The general rule for new sod is that when you fold up a piece of the sod, the ground and the bottom of the sod are moist and sticky, not wet and swampy. Once the grass takes hold of the ground the water could then gradually be cut back.

## **Established Bermuda and Zoysia Grass**

### **October thru mid April**

- No water is necessary as the irrigation system will be winterized and grass is dormant

### **April thru mid June**

- Water every other day, 1 time per day
- Optimum watering time is between 5am and 1pm
- Rotor heads: 15-20 minutes using each zone
- Spray heads: 4-8 minutes using each zone

### **June thru early September**

- Water every other day, 2 times per day
- Optimum watering time is between 3am and 11am
- Rotor heads: 7-25 minutes every time watering
- Spray heads: 3-10 minutes every time watering

### **September thru mid October**

- Since grass is going dormant, water every 2 or 3 days. The grass will not need much water.
- Optimum watering time is between 5am and 2pm

## **New Shrubs and Trees (Gallons per week)**

### **October thru February**

- Shrubs: 1-3 gallons for the first 4 weeks
- Trees: 3-5 gallons for the first 4 weeks, then taper off and watch for signs of stress

### **March thru June**

- Shrubs: 7-12 gallons for the first 5 weeks
- Trees: 10-20 gallons for the first 5 weeks

### **June thru September**

- Shrubs: 10-20 gallons for the first 5 weeks
- Trees: 15-20 gallons for the first 5 weeks

## **Existing Planting Beds**

### **Mid October thru late April**

- No watering necessary as the irrigation system will be winterized

### **May thru June**

- Using the drip zones, water the beds 2 times per week for 10-25 minutes each time.
- Optimum watering time is between 6am and 11am

### **June thru August**

- Using the drip zones, water the beds 3-4 times per week for 15-35 minutes each time.
- Optimum watering time is between 6am and 11am

### **September thru October**

- Using the drip zones, water the beds 2 times per week for 10-25 minutes each time.
- Optimum watering time is between 6am and 11am

**Note: Flowers will need more frequent watering. Spray zones in planting areas will not use these recommended times.**



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