

# Irrigation Tips for a Healthy Lawn

Did you know watering your lawn every day can actually damage it by encouraging shallow roots? By spreading out your watering, you can help your lawn to establish deeper roots that will help it survive drought periods.

Generally, watering deeper, for fewer days per week will encourage deeper root growth and a healthier lawn. Below are some tips for watering:

- Water in the early morning and when it's not windy. Avoid watering between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. to reduce loss by evaporation. If watering is done in the evening, grass stays wet all night which increases the risk of disease.
- Avoid irrigating too much, which causes shallow roots, lawn disease, and stress. You can check soil moisture with a simple moisture meter.
- It's best to water established lawns at the rate of 1 inch per week - applied all at 1-time to promote deep roots. Frequent light watering produces shallow roots and plants unable to tolerate dry periods.
- To promote deep roots and lawns that tolerate dry conditions, mow grass no shorter than two inches. Taller grass shades the soil, reducing evaporation.
- Promote deep root growth through a combination of proper watering, aeration, appropriate fertilization, and attention to grass height. **A lawn with deep roots requires less water and is more resistant to drought and diseases.**
- Mulch around plants, bushes, and trees to help soil retain moisture.
- Plant in the spring or fall when watering requirements are lower.
- Use chemicals wisely. Proper fertilizing promotes deep roots and drought tolerance. Improper fertilizing can have the opposite effect. Don't fertilize dry lawns - high concentrations of nutrients draw moisture out of the soil.
- Don't mow during the heat of the day, especially when conditions are dry. Newly cut grass loses water quickly.
- Control weeds to reduce competition for soil moisture. This can be done by hand or with careful use of herbicides.
- Aerate your lawn to improve water penetration and reduce runoff. Careless watering causes runoff, which can waste water and carry soil, waste, and pollutants into storm sewers, which empty into nearby streams and lakes.
- To prevent water loss, don't water your lawn when it is windy.
- Use a broom, rather than a hose, to clean sidewalks and driveways.