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How and When to Water Your Lawn

Soils and Watering

In planning your watering program, first determine the kind of soil you have in your lawn. It will likely be sand or clay, or a mixture of both. When $\frac{1}{2}$ "of rain falls on your sandy lawn, it penetrates down to a depth of about 6'. Since most of the grass roots are located within this area, applications in excess of $\frac{1}{2}$ " are wasteful. The excess water leaches away through the soil and serves no useful purpose. Clay soils on the other hand are just the opposite. Since the soil is so compacted, water penetrates this type of soil very slowly and excess water is often lost due to run off.

Sprinklers

Sprinklers play the largest part in a proper watering program. The type of sprinkler used is not as important as the proper use of the type you choose. Sprinklers should be checked periodically to see if all of the heads are functioning correctly. Always check the pattern of the heads to make sure tall grass or shrubs do not obstruct them.

- Portable sprinklers are generally the answer when the lawn area is small or cost is a major factor. When placing your portable sprinkler, make sure it is placed where all of your lawn will be equally covered.
- Traveling sprinklers offer a good alternative to the underground system, especially on larger lawn areas. When using the traveling sprinkler make sure one pass over the area wets the soil deeply enough. If not, repeat the process until desired wetness is achieved.
- The underground system is thought of as the ultimate in turf watering system. Properly designed and installed, this system lets the lawn owner water with minimum effort. Proper design is the key to a successful underground system. Since this type of system is generally the most costly and most difficult to modify, don't take shortcuts! Make sure your underground sprinkler system covers properly. Check the spray pattern of the head to make sure it overlaps with all of the adjacent heads.

Easy ways to measure

If you want to know how much water your sprinkler delivers in given time, and how evenly, here's a simple way to find out. Set four flat-bottomed straight-sided cans at various distances in a straight line from the sprinkler. Water your lawn for a specified amount of time, (try half an hour first). Measure the amount of water collected in each can with a ruler. For example, if $\frac{1}{4}$ " of water accumulates in half an hour then the sprinkler should run for one hour to obtain $\frac{1}{2}$ " of water.

Specifications for watering turf-type tall fescue

- **Established Lawn:** Requires 1 inch of water per week from May through September whether through rainfall or irrigation.
- **Newly Sodded Lawns:** Sod needs to be watered every day for the first three weeks. The soil should be wet to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. For the second three week period, decrease the frequency of watering to 3 times per week, but water for a longer period of time wetting the soil to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. Following the first six week period the sod should be watered at the rate of 1 inch per week.
- **Seeded Lawn:** The most suitable time for seeding is in the fall. The soil surface should be watered at least once a day to promote germination. Once germination occurs, it should still be watered every day but with a heavier application.

Our Credentials

NC Licensed Irrigation Contractor:	# 053 or # C-030
NC Licensed Plumber	# P17218
NC Licensed Landscape Contractor	# 0540
NC Licensed Backflow Tester	0223-CM9-252