



DON'T FORGET TO WATER!

Hot! Hot! Hot! Water! Water! Water!

August is often the hottest and driest month for Idaho.



How Often Should You Water Mature Turf?

The best way to determine when to water your grass is not to follow a set schedule. Rather, you need to pay attention to the grass itself.

The Science of Deep Watering

The key to watering mature turf is to let the grass reach the early stages of drought stress before you water. This may seem anathema to the home lawn enthusiast, who would never want to intentionally stress their turf. But the science indicates that this kind of stress is actually necessary for a plant to grow the deep roots that will allow it to withstand actual drought.

When a plant—in this case, grass—experiences mild stress from water deprivation, it releases a hormone called Abscisic Acid (ABA). As the drought persists and more ABA is produced, the grass takes action to preserve its water. The stomata, tiny pores in the grass blade, close up to preserve water, and the cuticle, the surface of the grass blade, grows thicker. The increased ABA causes a plant to grow deeper roots to reach out for more moisture deeper underground.

The goal of deep, infrequent watering is to allow the grass to experience mild to moderate drought stress so that it produces ABA and deeper roots between waterings.

Deep watering doesn't just mean turning on your sprinkler and leaving it. The goal is to moisten the soil to the full depth of the roots, at least 6 inches, if not more. However, a single soaking may not do it. Start by turning on the sprinklers for 15 minutes, then come check to see if you are noticing runoff. If water is running off, that means the soil needs time to absorb the water. Turn off the water for 40 minutes or even an hour to let the water soak in, then water for another 15 minutes or until you see runoff. This may seem complicated at first, but if you take notes on your process, you should learn the unique characteristics of your lawn, your soil, and your turf.

Once you know your soil and turf conditions, you can water in spurts just long enough to soak the soil. Keep watering on and off like this until the soil is moist at least 6 inches deep.

Deep, infrequent watering is only suitable for mature turf. Young turf, newly-laid sod, or freshly-seeded grass needs the top layers of the soil to stay moist at all times. Its roots are not long enough to reach moisture deeper down, and it is not mature enough to handle drought-induced stress. With younger turf, water daily to ensure the top layer of soil is continually moist.

Thank You,



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