

WATERING A NEW LAWN

Now that your lawn has been planted, watering becomes the most important part of the job. Watering is so important that it can make the difference between luxuriant success and total failure. Failures further delay the look of a beautiful lawn and translate into even more watering. So the "key" is doing it right the first time.

The most important thing to remember about grass seed is that it must be close to the surface of the soil to germinate (sprout) properly. Therefore, successful germination depends on ample moisture at the soil surface. Soil can dry out very quickly on sunny or windy days.

So during the first few weeks of watering, you need to concentrate on keeping the lawn surface moist. This is best accomplished by frequent light waterings, especially on hot, sunny days. Areas of the lawn in full sun need watered more often than partially shaded areas. Lawn edges and curb areas are very easy to miss. Slopes always dry out faster than level areas. The best rule of thumb is: "If in doubt - WATER!"

The most frequently asked question is:

When is the best time of day to water?

Morning is the best, even if it is just before sunrise. Afternoon waterings are also fine (required some days), even though more water is lost to evaporation. Late evening is the time to avoid watering a lawn if possible. Why? Turfgrass watered in the evening tends to stay wet all night, providing an ideal environment for fungus disease. Young seedlings are especially vulnerable to certain fungi which can wipe out large areas of grass overnight! (Particular caution with evening watering must be exercised during hot and humid weather, i.e. summer nights when it is "muggy").



Too little, too late?

Lawn watering summary:

- First: Keep the lawn surface moist for the first 3 weeks (light daily watering).
- Then: For the next 3 weeks, water more thoroughly but less often 2 to 3 times per week).
- Timing: Try to avoid watering in the evening, unless your work schedule makes it absolutely necessary.
- Mowing: Begin mowing the lawn when it reaches 5" to 6" in height, cutting to a length of 3" to 3 ½" for the whole first season. Bagging the clippings is usually best for a new lawn. Clean the underside of the mower often to prevent clogging (young grass is very succulent and will clog-up).
- Straw (if applicable): It's alright to leave straw on the lawn surface, provided it isn't thick enough to smother young seedlings.
- Leaves: In fall, keep the lawn clear of leaves. Leaves can block sunlight and water, and suffocate young seedlings by "matting down".
- Bare spots: 3 to 6 weeks after the initial seeding, spot-seed bare and thin areas. It is important to continue proper watering.



New sod lawns require regular watering to aid establishment

In Conclusion:

Water all areas (3) times per day @ 30 minutes for 1st few days, then back off on areas that are becoming squishy to 15 minutes per for (3) times a day, until grass germinates and you begin to see green. Then, (2) times a day should be sufficient. Just remember, if it's wet underfoot, you're good. If not, water.

If you do your lawn in Mid-summer, these are the standards. If done in the Fall months, it will require less.