



## Summer lawn care

### About Watering

1. **To water or not to water?** It is important to make a decision about whether or not you'll provide regular watering for your lawn to keep its green color, or let it go dormant in the summer. Dormancy is best suited for well-established lawns rather than new or heavily trafficked lawns. Residents in new developments where topsoil has been removed may want to keep their lawns watered.
2. **Dormant grass is not dead.** Turfgrasses are cool-season plants designed for dormancy when water is scarce, though they may look ugly and brown. After 4-6 weeks of no rain, even dormant grass needs to be watered. Watering it seldom and deeply (1-1.5 inches) will keep the roots alive without causing the grass to green up. This encourages deeper roots that are more drought-tolerant.
3. **Don't tease your lawn with an occasional sprinkle.** Sporadic, irregular watering "confuses" your turf resulting in shallow rooting and stress. If you're watering grass to maintain its green color, approximately 1" of water per week is necessary. Measure using a rain gauge (why yes, you're welcome!) or even a tuna can.
4. **How and when you water matters.** Overwatering is more of a problem for homeowners than is under-watering (contact Franklin Soil and Water to see if you qualify for a free irrigation sensor). Too much irrigation deprives plant roots of oxygen, and can contribute to water pollution when fertilizer is washed away before grass is able to use it. Grubs will enjoy laying eggs in your damp lawn too! Watering deeply in the morning when water is needed and less likely to evaporate is ideal.

### Mow High and Let It Lie

Keeping your grass a little taller at about 3" in the summer reduces soil temperatures, preserves moisture, prevents weed germination, and helps maintain turfgrass quality. Grass that's cut too closely is easily stressed, causing it to brown more quickly than longer grass. Dandelions are especially common in lawns that are thin or cut too short. Leaving the grass clippings on your lawn recycles nutrients, and doesn't cause thatch (it's caused by over-fertilization and over-watering that produce excess growth and long clippings.) Grass in our storm drains pollute our water, and provide nutrient-rich "food" for algae- so keep that mower aimed away from the street, and be sure to clean up after yourself!

### Proper Lawn Care Practices Protect Our Streams

Healthy lawns benefit our streams because they absorb more water during rain storms, require less fertilizer, and are less likely to require pesticide and/or herbicide application than unhealthy lawns.

*Program support comes from the following communities:*

