



LAWN IRRIGATION GUIDE

Lawn irrigation accounts for nearly half of homeowner water usage. Many homeowners irrigate too often and for too short a period to meet lawn and especially landscaping (tree and shrub) needs. Others tend to leave the water running too long, resulting in wasted water.

Turf studies show that most lawns only require irrigation once every 4 to 8 days to stay healthy and green. Shallow rooted plants result from irrigating every day.

Irrigating less often and applying more water per irrigation results in deeper rooted plants and a healthier turf. Grass roots grow deeper into the soil and the plants become stronger if enough water is applied when you do irrigate.

If grass doesn't spring back after being stepped on, it's probably time to irrigate.

It takes less water to maintain a green lawn if soil fertility is high. Weed levels also tend to be lower in a well fertilized lawn.

For optimal results, apply your fertilizer in split applications rather than one spring application. For example, in the Snake River Plains and Eastern Oregon and Washington, apply 2 pounds of ammonium sulfate each "holiday" during the growing season -

Memorial Day, July Fourth, Labor Day, and Halloween.

Two fertilizer applications, while not as good as four, is better than one spring application. Split applications also reduce the danger of burning your lawn or risk of surface runoff and deep leaching from a high nitrogen application.

Irrigate through mid-September. Allow plants to slow their growth and harden for winter. Water again about mid-October to store moisture in the soil.

Evergreen shrubs and trees transpire during the winter, so it's important they have adequate soil moisture to ensure they don't stress during the winter period. A deep watering just prior to soil freeze up will help ensure shrubs and trees are healthy the next spring.

The irrigation schedule on the next page offers a guide. Your lawn may need more water when it is especially hot or less during cooler periods or when it rains. Avoid irrigating if possible on windy days and midday when the evaporation level is the highest. Try to irrigate during early morning hours to avoid fungal diseases. Proper lawn irrigation can save a lot of water – and it saves you money.

Determine Your Lawn Watering Needs

1. Set 3 or more flat bottom cans or mugs at various locations on your lawn and at least 4 feet from sprinkler heads.
2. Turn on your sprinkler(s) for 15 minutes.
3. Measure the depth of water in each can with a ruler and determine the average water depth.
4. Match your sprinkler output to the table below and water the number of minutes indicated. Days between irrigation may vary based on season of year, soil textures, soil depth, aspect, elevation and other local conditions.

Water Depth in Cans	1/8"	3/16"	1/4"	5/16"	3/8"	1/2"	5/8"	3/4"	1"
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Watering Time in Minutes

Spring - 0.5 inch water every 5-8 days	60	40	30	25	20	15	12	10	8
Summer - 1.0 inch water every 4-7 days	120	80	60	50	40	30	25	20	15
Fall - 0.75 inch water every 5-8 days	90	60	45	38	30	23	18	15	12

Note: Adjustments to the chart above for local conditions and soils may be necessary to meet your specific lawn and landscaping water needs. If irrigation water is running off site, stop watering for a short period to allow water to soak in and then continue watering for the recommended period.

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