



TURF TIPS

P.O. Box 10610
Casa Grande, Arizona 85230
Phoenix 602-268-8811
Tucson 520-884-7111
www.westernsod.com

Watering Guidelines For NEW PLANTINGS Including Winter Overseed

Newly planted sod needs to be watered much differently than established lawns. New sod must be watered more frequently for the first three weeks. For established lawns however, only water often enough to avoid wilt between irrigations. (See other side for more detailed information for established lawns.)

Newly Planted Sod: Water four times daily in the summer and two times daily in the winter, during daylight hours. Soak the sod enough to keep the top three inches of soil along with the layer of sod constantly wet, but do not allow water to stand for long periods. When rooting has sufficiently developed to prevent sod from being pulled from the soil (about 14 days), cut watering to once a day during summer and every other day in the winter. After 21 days water 2 to 3 times a week in the summer and every 3 to 10 days in the winter. Tables 1 and 2 detail watering frequency and duration for new sod in summer or winter.

TABLE 1

Watering New Sod

Summer Schedule: Temperatures Above 90 Degrees F

Time Since Planting	Watering Frequency	Suggested Schedule	Duration
First 14 days	4 times daily	8 & 11 a.m./ 2 & 5 p.m.	5 to 10 minutes
15 to 21 days	1 time daily	Between 10 a.m. & 3 p.m.	15 to 20 minutes
Roots usually established after 21 days	2 to 3 times per week	Between 3 & 6 a.m.	Water should penetrate 8 to 10 inches deep

TABLE 2

Watering New Sod (Dormant Bermuda Sod Overseeded with Winter Ryegrass)

Winter Schedule: Temperatures Below 90 Degrees F

Time Since Planting	Watering Frequency	Suggested Schedule	Duration
First 14 days	2 times daily	9 a.m. & 2 p.m.	10 to 15 minutes
15 to 21 days	1 time, every other day	10 a.m.	15 to 20 minutes
Roots usually established after 21 days	3 to 10 days, depending on weather	Between 3 & 6 a.m.	Water should penetrate 4 to 6 inches deep

Tip 1 – If you have a dry area or a blue-gray area (a sign of water stress), place like-size containers in that area and one in a green area. Water 15-30 minutes, then measure both containers. If the dry area is not getting the same amount of water, adjust the sprinkler heads.

Tip 2 – Use several shallow containers such as tuna cans or margarine containers and space throughout the yard. Water until the containers fill to 1 inch. However long this takes is how long you should water established turfgrass.

Tip 3 – To receive a Turf Care Calendar, please send your name and address to:

Free Turf Calendar, Western Sod, P.O. Box 10610, Casa Grande, AZ 85230.

TURF HOT LINE - 1-800-832-TURF

www.westernsod.com



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Watering Guidelines For ESTABLISHED Bermudagrass Lawns

The basic guidelines are to **water no more than necessary and to water deeply**. The soil surface should dry out between waterings. Do not water daily because it encourages the grass to maintain a shallow root system, thereby producing a lawn that is water inefficient, susceptible to disease and heat stress. The following guidelines will help you get started.

How Often To Water:

Only water enough to avoid wilt between irrigations. Symptoms of wilt include a bluish tinge and noticeable footprints of crushed grass after walking across a lawn. If wilt occurs five days after the last watering, water every four days. If wilt occurs after four days, water every three days.

Your lawn's specific water needs depend on the weather and soil conditions, but usually two or three deep waterings a week are sufficient for warm-season grasses when the temperatures are 90 degrees F and above. Water every three to ten days after the temperature drops below 90 degrees; water once a month during the winter for dormant bermudagrass, and water every five to ten days for bermudagrass overseeded with ryegrass.

Sandy soils require more frequent watering than clay and silt soils.

How Deep to Water:

For each irrigation, water should penetrate the soil to a depth of **eight to ten inches** for bermudagrass. This will help promote deep rooting. Ideally, the goal is to have 80 percent of the lawn's roots in the top eight inches of soil. (In winter months, bermuda overseeded with ryegrass can be watered to a depth of four to six inches.) To test if you are watering deeply enough, push a probe (such as a long screwdriver) into the ground 30 minutes after watering, allowing time for the water to move down into the soil. The probe should easily penetrate the proper depth.

Another test is to use a shallow container such as a tuna can. Water until there is one inch of water in the container. One inch of water will get down to 8-12 inches in the soil. However long this takes is how long you should water.

Watering efficiency is significantly increased when the lawn has a deep, strong, root system. Proper soil preparation and maintenance will help hold water longer. Also, root depth is directly related to grass plant height. When you mow at the maximum recommended height, the roots will be deeper: thus the plant is more drought tolerant, and should be able to last longer between waterings.

Leaching salts from the lawn may be necessary once or twice a year, unless there have been very heavy rains. A deep watering of two feet is advisable.

What Time of Day:

The best time of day to water is **early morning** when evaporation is at the lowest and surface winds have not yet developed. Less wind movement allows proper water distribution from the sprinkler heads. Early morning irrigation avoids prolonged free water on the leaves, and helps cut down on disease.

Water Coverage with Sprinkler Systems:

We recommend a good quality **automated** sprinkler system. Sprinkler systems should have even **head-to-head coverage**

enabling water to spray to the center of each sprinkler head next to it and to the heads across from it. Check for uniform coverage and proper operation, at least seasonally, or more often if you see uneven growth, dry patches, or puddles. Place like-size containers, i.e. tuna cans, in stress area(s) and in a green area. Water about 15-30 minutes, then measure both containers. If the dry area is not getting the same amount of water, adjust the sprinkler heads.

Gradually change your automatic timer or watering with seasonal weather and temperature changes. After a power outage, check the settings on timers and reset if necessary. Also, reduce watering after heavy rains to avoid soil that stays wet for seven to ten days. To avoid water runoff on slopes, or if water does not penetrate eight to ten inches without runoff, use the "water-and-wait" cycle. Program your sprinkler system to run for a few minutes, shut down long enough for the water to soak in, then water a few more minutes. Keep this water-and-wait cycle going until water penetrates eight to ten inches without runoff.

12 Water-Saving Tips

1. Mow as infrequently as possible. Follow the One Third Rule—Cut only the top one-third of the turf at any single mowing.
2. Your mower should have a sharp blade.
3. Regular mowing keeps the grass from blocking sprinklers.
4. Your sprinklers should water just the lawn, not the driveway or the street.
5. Replace broken and missing sprinkler heads. A missing sprinkler can lose more than 12 gallons per minute.
6. Hand-water areas prone to run-off or areas not reached by sprinklers.
7. Remove or reduce thatch if it is more than 1/2 inch thick.
8. Core or aerify compacted soil.
9. Avoid excessive nitrogen fertilization.
10. Wetting agents are beneficial for some soils.
11. Shaded areas require about 30% less water than full sun areas.
12. Do not mix sprinkler heads or nozzle size within one zone.

SPRINKLER RUN TIME SCHEDULE *

Water to Apply	Spray Sprinklers	PGM Rotors	PGP Rotors	I-20 Ultra Rotors
1"	40 min.	130 min.	150 min.	150 min.

WATERING INFORMATION ALSO IS AVAILABLE FROM:

City of Phoenix (602-256-3433); Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (602-248-8482); Tucson Water (520-791-4331); Arizona Department of Water Resources (Phx: 602-417-2465; Tucson: 520-628-6758); or your local County Extension Office. The daily newspaper has a lawn watering guide on the weather page.

* Residential Sprinkler System Design Handbook by Hunter Industries, Inc.