



## Stressed Out!

*We have had little to no rain the past 30 days and its beginning to take a toll on our landscape.*



With a short winter this year and record Temps since March our lawn and landscapes are beginning to show sever signs of stress. Irrigation is only meant to act as supplemental water between rain falls, not the main source. You will notice hot spots throughout the turf areas at your home or community. Not much can be done to eliminate the stress when only watering one or two days per week for a short time. Remember there are also water restrictions in place that must be followed. If you live in a community that it's the residents' responsibility to water, please make sure to run the irrigation on your scheduled days. Sod must be watered a minimum

of 45-60 minutes and plant material 30 minutes each watering cycle.

One of the most common summer lawn care pitfalls is inadequate watering. During my property walks with clients I hear everything from its too expensive to water; it rained yesterday so I turned off the irrigation system, its chinch bugs, fungus and or lack of fertilizer. Most of these excuses or reasons are assumptions at best. In Florida we deal with everything from extreme winters, drought, extreme summer drought and one of the biggest culprits is poor soil. Poor soil means everything from no nutrients in the soil, soil compaction, poor grade which means it either holds water or the slope causes the water to runoff and not soak in. Poor drainage is also a big problem, down spouts sending all the water into a low area of sod that doesn't drain well. Water runoff and no gutters will cause the water to drain into landscape beds and or turf areas.



Here are a few lawn irrigation tips to help you avoid damage to your lawn during summer:



- A common misunderstanding is that if it rained last night the sprinkler system could be turned off next day. There are many factors that do not support this philosophy, one of them being the types of soil and specific ground layout. Generally, most communities have three types of soils: Clay, Loam, and Sand. Each has its own water absorbing properties and can react differently to the same watering. Most people don't have a purely clay or purely sandy soil, but rather a

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combination (i.e. sandy-loam, Clayish-Loam, etc.). It important to know to some level the type of soil you have for an appropriate watering schedule. For example, if the soil is clay based soil, because of its high density it will take longer to soak up water and subsequently longer to release it. Additionally, its density leads to poor aeration which precludes nutrients to reach the roots of the grass, resulting in exposed roots and subsequent higher exposure to adverse conditions. Overwatering can be damaging as well, but less watering will always have severe consequences.

- Lawns that are on slope or grade are much more difficult to water. Combine this situation with a hard or loose soil, and the ability to sustain a good looking lawn is significantly more challenging. These slopes also receive more sun and heat during the day, this combined with water runoff that leads to soil compaction will cause the roots to become shallow and the turf to decline. Set your sprinkler system so it waters less minutes more often and it will dispense water in a slow manner so the ground will be able to absorb the water and avoid run-off.



- With the advent of drought, heat waves, and water restrictions, it is now more important than ever to use water in the most efficient and effective manner when watering your lawn. In order to do this, it is important to understand the obstacles to doing so: high heat, evaporation, wind, lawn diseases, and politicians (water restrictions). So here a few guidelines you can follow:

- Always try to water your lawn in the early morning or at night. Early morning watering is best due to the lack of evaporation that takes place, low winds that can blow your lawn dry, high humidity and morning dew that adds to the moisture. Start early, before the heat of the day can burn the water off.
- Since no two lawns in the same neighborhood grown from the same grass seed are alike, it can be tricky fine-tuning your watering routine from a standardized lawn-care guide. Soil factors, topography, and exposure to sun and wind all affect your lawn's performance during the spring and summer months. If there's one thing to remember, it's that watering frequency is never as vital as watering depth. A once per week deep watering that penetrates into the soil from four six inches can do more good for thirsty grass than daily sprinkling. In hot weather, lawns typically need at least an inch of water per week. If it's hot and dry, the lawn will need more like 2.5 inches of water per week.



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