



Watering & General Care of Plants, Trees, Sod & Seeded Lawns

Watering Plants:

Lack of enough water during the first growing season is a major cause of plant loss. The limited root system on these plants makes them highly susceptible to dry weather damage. **Watering is absolutely necessary.** Please follow the guidelines for watering new trees or shrubs to help ensure the survival of your new plants.

- **Water at the base**, being mindful not to water the stem or leaves. Wet the soil enough to soak through the root system at each watering (approximately, 12"-18" deep for shrubs and 18"-24" for trees). This may be 5-10 minutes for shrubs and 20-30 minutes for trees with the water on low. Watering with a slow trickle will provide the deep watering needed to establish deep root growth.
- Water 2-3 times per week (more often during hot windy weather) unless there is at least 1" of rainfall per week. Check at base of plant with your finger, if finger goes in and it's moist you have enough water. Pay attention to leaves if they are yellow or curl, needs water
- Water well into the fall. Evergreens require sufficient moisture during the winter months and, therefore, it is especially important for them to be watered until the ground freezes.

Water requirements will vary with soil types. Until plants are established, which will take a few years, continue to observe dry spells and supplement water as needed.

Keep in mind that irrigation is installed to water the lawn (turf) and even if you have plant irrigation in place, it most likely will not be sufficient to meet the needs of new plant material.

General Care After Planting:

Pruning Trees: Improving the structure is of primary importance. Work for uniform spacing of the main stems and branches; thin out weak branches; eliminate weak crotches; vertical branches; raise the head of a tree gradually by removing the lower branches, starting at least 2 years after planting.

Pruning Shrubs: Keep shrubs shapely and restricted by heading in young growth. Basic rules are to prune after flowering (usually spring or summer). Drastic pruning of shrubs should only be done on old wood by removing to the ground.

Fertilizing: After the first year, fertilize trees and shrubs regularly. There are a wide range of fertilizers available for all types of plant materials. Check a nearby Garden Center for a specific fertilizer for your needs.

Mulching: When using wood mulch, it is recommended to top dress the beds every 2-3 years with approximately 2" of new mulch to make up for decomposition and prevent weeds or unwanted growth in the beds.

Rose Care: Do not fertilize roses in the fall. This can result in new growth that may not harden in time for winter, therefore causing dieback. Prune roses in the spring: cut out approximately 1/3 of the stems taking the older stems first. Then trim remaining stems for height trimming back to the bud.



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Watering Newly SODDED Lawns

It is essential to begin watering new turf within a half hour after it is laid. Apply at least 1 inch of water so that the soil beneath the turf is very wet.

Ideally, the soil 3 to 4 inches below the surface will be moist. In dry or windy conditions, move your sprinklers often so that no area goes too long without water. Once you get through the first day, you can catch up on deeper watering in the evening and early morning.

FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS (or until the turf is well-rooted): Keep the below-turf soil surface moist with daily (or more frequent) watering of approximately 1/4 inch each. Especially hot, dry, or windy periods will necessitate increased watering amounts and frequency.

Watering Tip #1: Pull back a corner of the turf and push a screwdriver or other sharp tool into the soil. It should push in easily and have moisture along the first 3-4 inches, if not apply more water.

Watering Tip #2: Make absolutely certain that water is getting to all areas of your new lawn. Pay special attention to corners and edges as these are easily missed by many sprinklers and are vulnerable to drying out faster than the center portion of your new lawn. Areas near buildings dry out faster due to reflected heat.

Watering Tip #3: Runoff may occur on some soils and sloped areas before the soil is adequately moist. To conserve water and insure adequate soak-in, turn off the water when runoff begins, wait 30 minutes to an hour and restart the watering on the same area and repeat as needed.

Watering Tip #4: As the turf starts to knit its new roots into the soil it will be difficult to near impossible and harmful to pull back a corner to check beneath the turf. You can still use a sharp tool to check moisture by pushing it through the turf and into the soil.

Watering Tip #5: Water as early in the morning as possible to take advantage of the daily start of the grass's normal growing cycle, lower wind speeds, and less loss of water by evaporation.

Signs that turf is dry and needs IMMEDIATELY Watering are:

- Sod will shrink in width and length
- Leaves/blades will curl and a need-like appearance
- Dry spots will discolor into a purple or gray color



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Watering Newly SEEDED Lawns:

Watering newly seeded lawns is both simple yet complicated. There is only one chance to germinate seed correctly. Not enough and the seed will die. Too much and the results can be less than ideal.

All seed requires a certain temperature and moisture before germination can begin. It is important to remember once germination begins and conditions change they can be vulnerable to die-off. If the newly established seed/grass dries out, it will die-off. With that being said your objective is to **maintain adequate moisture**. Germination can take 7-30 days depending on temperature, moisture, variety of seed and depth buried. We use a blended seed and top it off with a seedless shredded hay to maintain moisture. Once grass becomes visible, the root structure is starting to establish, and the seed is **not as** vulnerable to dying-off. However **continue watering** as the seed will not sprout all at once.

Once the grass changes from a light lime color to a deep green it will be safe to back off the watering. But not entirely.

Avoid walking on newly seeded areas as it may leave depressions and compaction which will hinder new growth.

Keep the top one inch moist at all times in the early stages; this may take 10-15 minutes depending on conditions. Repeat this step 2-3 times per day until grass is deep green.

Watering Tip #1: Water at least twice per day, possibly more depending if it is extremely hot or windy. When watering a new lawn stick with 10-15 minutes 2-3 times per day, any longer there is potential to cause the seed to runoff.

Watering Tip #2: Once your seed has sprouted continue to lightly water twice per day. Do not saturate at this stage of development as the seed is vulnerable to overwatering as much as drying out.

Watering Tip #3: When the grass reaches a couple inches tall and turns a darker green it is okay to cut back watering to once every couple of days.

Watering Tip #4: Once grass reaches mowing height 3-4 inches, root growth is established and you may begin to water deeper and longer to promote a deep root growth.