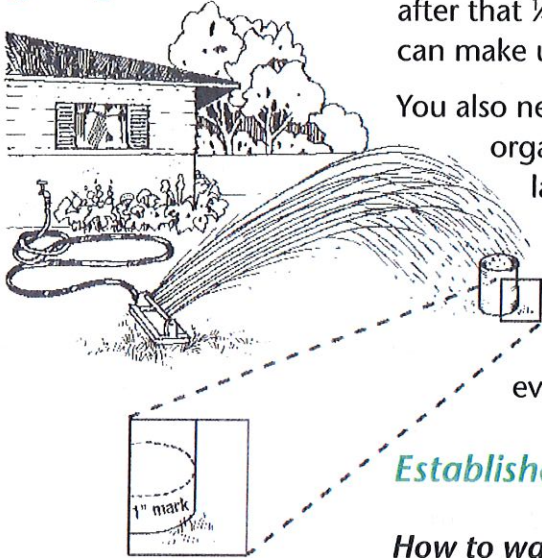


THE FINE ART OF LAWN WATERING

A container with a once-inch mark placed under your sprinkler will help gauge how much water your lawn is getting.



A healthy lawn requires about one inch of water per week. As a general rule, apply the water all at once rather than in several light waterings. Before you water, do some arithmetic. If it just rained $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, you probably only need to apply $\frac{3}{4}$ inch with the sprinkler. Use common sense, however, and consider the weather forecast. If there is a good chance of rain soon after that $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch rainfall, don't water at all. If the rain doesn't come, you can make up the difference.

You also need to know your lawn. For example, sandy soils with little organic matter will require more water, heavy clay soils less. Sloping lawns are normally drier than level, low-lying ones. Lawns under large trees, especially during cool weather, may need little or no watering. Avoid watering during the middle of the day when evaporation rates are highest and the water you use will do the least good. Early morning watering will minimize evaporation and help newly seeded areas through the day's heat.

Established lawns

How to water

- It's best to water established lawns at the rate of one inch per week, applied all at one time to promote deep rooting. Frequent, light waterings favor shallow roots and plants unable to tolerate dry periods.
- Water early in the morning. If watering is done in the evening, grass stays wet all night, thus increasing risk of disease.

Keep in mind...

- Established, healthy lawns can survive several weeks of dormancy during summer with little or no water.
- Watering early in the morning puts less strain on public water supplies because the peak load is during evening.
- Excess water can keep the soil too moist, which damages roots.

If you use sod instead of seed...

How to water

- ✓ Soak newly laid sod with one inch of water. Use a marked container to measure the amount applied.
- ✓ Water lightly every other day for two weeks after sodding. When grass is established, water according to the guidelines for established lawns.

Keep in mind...

- ✓ Excess water can drown sod in poorly drained areas, or cause erosion between or under pieces of sod on slopes.

Newly seeded grass

How to water

- Mulch newly seeded areas with straw, marsh hay or lawn clippings to reduce evaporation from the soil surface.



- Light watering every other day is generally sufficient as long as the soil was moist at seeding time.
- Water less frequently when the grass reaches two inches high.

Keep in mind...

- Overwatering can wash away seeds, cause seeds to rot before they germinate, increase the chances of disease, or slow the growth of new grass.
- Grasses in Wisconsin lawns grow best in cool weather. Plant seed in spring (late April to mid-May) or fall (late August to mid-September) when it's cooler and more rain can be expected.
- When selecting seed, consider bluegrass and fescue mixes, which tend to be more drought-tolerant than ryegrasses.