



The key to a beautiful lawn is a customer who cares!

Mowing

Mowing is the most important part of your regular maintenance. Mowing the lawn at the proper height and frequency increases turf density & your lawns' ability to withstand drought, heat and pest problems. It will also decrease the occurrence of weeds. Follow these guidelines to maintain the lawn for best results:

➤ **Mow at the proper height**

- Cool season grasses, like tall fescue, bluegrass and ryegrass, should be mowed at precisely 3 inches. Use a ruler to measure the height, as mower settings varies greatly and do not always reflect actual height of the grass in inches.
- Warm season grasses, like bermudagrass and zoysia, should be mowed at 2 inches.

➤ **Mowing Frequency**

- The most important rule of thumb to remember when mowing is to mow often enough so as never to remove more than one third (1/3) of the leaf area of the grass. For example, if you are mowing your tall fescue lawn at 3 inches, than you should mow before the lawn grows any taller than 4 inches.

➤ **Maintain a sharp mower blade.**

- A dull blade can cause drought stress and disease problems.

➤ **Leave down your grass clippings**

- If you mow regularly, it is beneficial to leave the clippings down. Clippings decompose on their own and supply free fertilizer in the process. **Only remove clippings** if your lawn has grown excessively high or if your technician has recommended doing so in your note.

➤ **Be careful with the heavy garden equipment**

- Especially on slopes, tractor tires can actually rip the grass out of the ground and cause major problems with soil compaction.

Watering

Good irrigation practices can maintain grass growth and density during stressful times, reduce weed problems, mask damage from some insects and reduce the potential need for insecticide and herbicide applications. In contrast, improper watering, particularly light, infrequent watering, can lead to severe disease problems and crabgrass encroachment. Watering deep and infrequently is far better than watering every day for a short time. Follow these guidelines for proper watering.

➤ **DO NOT WATER AT NIGHT!**

- The major cause of brown patch and other disease problems in tall fescue and bluegrass lawns is light, frequent, nighttime watering. Watering is necessary to keep the lawn green during drought, but needs to be practical and fit your schedule. Consult your Lawn Technician (or their written notes) for your specific watering instructions.

➤ **Look for signs of drought stress to signal you to water.**

- Look for dark, smoky-blue looking patches of grass. Also, footprints or other tracks in the lawn that are visible for several minutes (or longer!) after they are made are signs of drought stress. Concentrate your watering in these areas! If the rest of the lawn is green and certain areas are stressed, water just the stressed areas.

➤ **Water the lawn deeply**

- When you do decide to water, wet the soil at least 3 inches deep. Water running off into the street is wasted. Deep watering will encourage a deep root system, which will help your lawn utilize more of the subsurface moisture and help it resist the onset of drought.
- Do not apply water faster than the lawn can absorb it.

Lawn Clean Up

- Keep the lawn clean and free of debris. Leaves, sticks, or anything else left on the lawn for extended periods of time will kill the grass and cause bare spots. A light to moderate layer of leaves will not hurt for short periods. Try to get them up before they settle in.
- Parking cars and other vehicles will cause compaction and do irreparable damage.

Summary

Maintaining a healthy, attractive lawn, which has reduced pest problems and thus, a reduced need for pesticide applications, is possible. This can be achieved through consistent monitoring of your lawns progress, sound and routine cultural practices, such as mowing and watering, and faithful attention to the information and recommendations left by your specialist.

Remember, **we are not on your lawn every day of the season!** If you see a problem develop in between your regular services that doesn't clear up with proper mowing and watering, be sure to call the office for a service call.