

Watering tips for a healthy lawn

Water deeply and infrequently. Moisten the entire root zone and then let it partially dry out. Frequent shallow watering causes shallow rooting, making your lawn more prone to drought stress. Overwatering can promote lawn disease, leach nutrients from the soil, and waste water.

Water slowly, or start and stop your sprinkler, so the water penetrates rather than puddling or running off. Sandy soils will need lighter, more frequent watering because they can't hold as much water as clay soils.

Water when it's cool. Watering mid-day, especially when it's sunny, will lose half the water to evaporation. Morning watering is best; evening watering can promote diseases such as red thread or rust.

Measure your sprinkler's output. Lawns only need one inch of water a week, including rain. Set out tuna cans around the yard to measure sprinkler output.

Use a mulch mower. This will reduce water needs and feed your lawn, reducing fertilizer needs.

Mow higher. Longer grass blades (2-2 ½ inches) will be stronger and will shade the soil surface, reducing the need for water.

Aerate your lawn in the spring or fall. Aeration will open up compacted soils and allow for more water and air movement. It's a good idea to overseed at the same time to thicken the lawn.

Newly planted lawns may need daily watering if planted in the late spring or summer. It will save watering effort if you replant a lawn in September.

This article was brought to you courtesy of King County and the Redmond-Bear Creek Groundwater Protection Committee.