



Use Your Water Quota Wisely

When you're only allowed a few hours for outdoor watering, knowing how much water to give your lawn is important.

University of Georgia experts say homeowners normally water too much and too often. This creates an environment for disease.

An inch of water a week is the rule of thumb. Most sprinkler systems apply about one-fourth inch of water per hour.

But sprinklers can vary. They all have different nozzles, so you should test your system's output.

To test your sprinkler, place open-top containers of the same size, such as margarine tubs, randomly on your lawn. After an hour, measure the amount of water in each container.

The difference in the amounts will give you an estimate of the water distribution and application rate. When you have an inch of water in your containers, you know you've applied enough water.

Homeowners should also keep in mind how fast the water is absorbed by the soil. Apply enough water to soak the soil 6 to 8 inches deep. If your system applies water too fast, the water will run off and you're just watering the curb and sidewalk.

To make the most of your efforts, water between sundown and sunrise.

And, when it comes to turf, watering more often than recommended will actually hurt it. Light, frequent irrigation produces shallow and weak root systems. A shallow root system prevents efficient use of plant nutrients and water in the soil.

Mowing your lawn regularly is important, too, especially during dry spells. Mow often enough that no more than one-third of the leaf tissue is removed during a cutting.

And raise the mowing height. This helps the grass maintain a deep root system, which helps it find more water.

Source:

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