

## Best Practices & Tips

- Watering effectively is key! As most believe that water a few days a week is best, that is a myth. Short, cycled watering doesn't allow the grass to be successful, in fact it can breed fungus', mold, and breed other types of disease into the lawn.
  - The best way to water is to water for long periods once a week. The goal of watering is to allow the water to soak into the soil at least 1" deep to keep the roots moist, the soil soft, and allow full absorption. Water short cycles does not accomplish this goal, it only allows the surface to be water, approx. 1/4" deep and dries out before the next watering cycle happens.
    - Suggested watering for each home should be approximately 35-45 minutes per zone.
      - Home that are on hills may need to adjust this back to keep run off from happening
  - All watering should start during the early morning hours and should be completed before the sun comes up to allow the ground to absorb the water and not lose any to evaporation.
  - Watering late in the afternoon or early evening will also damage the lawn, as most of the water is being evaporated, and can create stress and burn out spots from the heat and direct sunlight.
  - Water for homes on a slope/terrace should be the one watering the high side of their property, allowing the water to run downhill with gravity and help water the home on the low side. And flip-flop on the opposite side of the home. This will help prevent watering, standing water and turf damage with the mowers running through standing water and creating issues in the lawns.
  - Please do not that the lawns the night before or the morning of your scheduled cutting maintenance. Cutting wet grass is detrimental to the lawn. It causes the grass blade to be torn instead for cut, which can create issues in the lawn, such as stress, weakness in the lawn. It also causes the mowers to slip and slide in the lawn tearing the grass up, creating indentation in the soil, and causes the lawn to look uneven.
- Proper schedule maintenance of aerations, over-seedings, top dressing, lime treatments etc., should be done on a frequent basis.
  - Aeration: Should be done every other year to help break up the clay compaction, soften the soil, and allow the turf care treatments to be absorbed properly into the soil.
  - Over-seeding is as desired and an easy way to fill in bare spots, improve the density of turf, establish improved grass varieties, and enhance your lawn's color.
    - For Bermuda grass this should be done during prime growing season.
    - If overfeeding has been done, it is not permitted for a mower to be on the lawn for a minimum of 3 weeks.
  - Lime treatments: Should be applied every fall/winter which adds calcium and magnesium to the soil.
    - Soil with high acidity (Georgia Red Clay) prevents your grass from absorbing nutrients from the ground. High acidity soil will keep the grasses from becoming dark green and may also have bare spots, lime can help create the deep green by leveling out the PH levels in the soil.

- Sparse grass can be a sign of a lack of nutrients, which is very frustrating for homeowners who are regularly applying a slow-acting fertilizer. Acidity levels can work against your best efforts, adding lime to your soil may help your grass grow faster and thicker. Not only does this lend itself to a lush lawn, but one that's robust enough to fight off problems such as disease, fungus, molds, and spring dead spots.
  - Lime can also cleanse the soil, remove toxicities, and infuse the ground with essential nutrients. This often clears up common grass and turf issues, leading to a healthier and better-looking yard.
- Top Dressing: Is a sand and topsoil mix. (70% sand - 30% topsoil) This is used to fill in low spots in the lawn and help to level everything out. This will allow for thicker, lusher lawns. It also helps keep the mower on the area mowed even plain and allows for an even better cut. Overall, it keeps the lawn looking fuller, less uneven, and inconsistent.
- Animal Feces and urine are not good for the lawns at all. The acid in dog urine is extremely harmful to the lawn and causes the grass to lose its green color and stresses it out causing bright yellow areas in the lawn. If it is possible to walk the dogs and allow them to use wooded areas that is best. Once the urine yellows the lawn, those areas have to work twice as hard to catch back up to the rest of the lawn, and usually don't make it all the way back. This invites lawn disease, and other problematic issues into the lawn that could potentially spread.
- Keep the lawns clean and free of debris and obstacles. Leaving items laying in the lawn for a period of time causes stress in the grass such as yellowing, new growth patterns, and slows us down having to stop the mowers to move things out of the way.
  - Watering hoses, lawn tools, toys, dog leashes, furniture, etc. should all be picked up and removed from the lawn prior to each scheduled maintenance day.