



Lawn Watering Guide

Lawns are beautiful when properly maintained, and they need lots of water. But, what is the right amount of water for your lawn? How many days a week and for how long should the sprinkler system run to irrigate effectively and not over-water?

This Lawn Watering Guide will help you determine the proper irrigation for your lawn.

STEP 1: Measure how much water your sprinklers apply.

1. Place ten sprinkler gauges around your lawn, distributed evenly. Use tuna cans or similar wide-mouth containers.
2. Run the sprinklers for exactly 10 minutes.
3. In the spaces below, write down how much water was captured in each gauge. Calculate the average water depth to the nearest 0.05 inch. Use this average value to determine the proper timing of your spray irrigation valves.

Readings: _____ Average: _____

Note: The depth of water collected in the gauges should be relatively consistent. Otherwise, you may need to repair or replace malfunctioning sprinkler heads. If one measurement is much higher or much lower than the others do not include it in the average.

STEP 2: Set your controller.

Your controller should be set to water **four days a week** or **every other day** early in the morning. Program your controller to run for the number of minutes listed below in the column that corresponds to your average water depth. Repeat these steps for each lawn valve. Adjust run times seasonally. You could also contact a sprinkler supply store to determine the output of your sprinkler heads.

Your average water depth (inches)		0.1	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.45	0.5
Sprinkler output (inches per hour)		0.6	0.9	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.7	3
Number of minutes per cycle:	Spring	25	17	13	10	8	7	6	5	5
	Summer	30	20	15	11	9	8	7	6	6
	Fall	15	10	8	6	5	5	4	3	3
	Winter	Turn off controller - water only during extended dry periods.								

STEP 3: Fine-tune watering, as needed.

- Adjust for variations in the weather. Increase irrigation timing when weather is hotter than normal, and decrease timing when weather is cooler or foggier than normal.
- Lawns in shaded areas need less water than lawns in sunny or windy locations.
- Increase irrigation timing if lawn appears stressed. It will turn a dull grey green and blades will not bounce back when you walk on it. Increase water gradually, one minute at a time. (*Yellow lawn may be from gophers, over-watering, or nutrient deficiency*).

Other tips for outdoor water savings:

- Maintain your irrigation equipment regularly. Check all spray heads to make sure they are working properly and applying water evenly on the lawn. Replace broken heads and adjust those that are not watering evenly.
- Irrigate early in the morning to reduce water losses to wind and evaporation.
- Set your mower for 2 ½ to 3 inches. The longer blades of grass require less water as they shade the root zone more completely.
- Consider installing an ET controller. The latest technology uses weather data and evapotranspiration (ET) needs of the plants to determine the proper amount of water to apply.
- Choose a drought-tolerant grass such as tall fescue or red fescue. They grow more in the winter during the rainy season and slow down in the summer.
- Reduce the size of your lawn. Replace it with native or drought-tolerant plants that need less water and install drip irrigation.