

How often and how long should I water my LAWN each week?

Deep, infrequent watering is best for established lawns and trees. The goal is to saturate the top 6 inches of the soil once per week.

Once per week during most of the year is an adequate watering frequency. In the hottest parts of the summer you may need to water 2 times at most per week. But be sure to follow your local watering restrictions.

Early morning, between 2am-10am or 6pm-11pm are the best times to water your landscape.

How to evaluate how long to water:

Set out 5-6 open-top low profile cans randomly on the lawn (tuna and cat food cans work best because they have short sides). Turn the sprinkler head or system on for 30 minutes. Measure and record the depth of water caught in each individual can. Calculate the average depth of water from all of the cans in 30 minutes. (Add each amount together then divide by the number of cans.)

Use a garden spade to determine how deep the soil was wet during the 30-minute watering. Measure the depth of the wet soil. When you know how much water was applied in a 30-minute cycle and how deep that volume of water wet the soil, it is easy to determine how long the sprinkler head must run to adequately wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches.

Example: The system put out ½ inch of water in 30 minutes wetting the soil to a depth of 3 inches. Therefore, 1 inch of water will need to be applied to wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches giving a run time of 1 hour.

3" wet soil = ½"of water = 30 minutes

6" wet soil = 1"of water = 1 hour

If you find you're getting run-off before you saturate to 6-inches, you can split the cycle up into two sessions with a break in-between.

If you are having problems with your irrigation resetting itself during electrical service disruptions you might think of purchasing a battery backup (UPS) system akin to the kind used on computer systems. They are relatively affordable and can keep the timer from resetting.

If you are having problems with your pressure you might consider water during the evening period or when you neighbor(s) are not watering.

You might also raise the height of your mower blades to three inches to increase the canopy effect on the grass to help it cool itself to hold the moisture for a longer period of time.