

CEDARBROOK HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

LAWN MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

An attractive lawn raises property values and is an asset to the community. Remember, the Association regards grass over 6 inches or higher as too high. As homeowners you are responsible for maintaining all of your lot, including areas within the right-of-ways, behind the curb of the street and sidewalk area, drainage easements, and any other easement areas on your property. When you make the effort to keep your yard looking good, it pays off for everyone in the community with increased appeal and home values.

Remember, as per the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions exterior maintenance is subject to reasonable requirements that are established by the Architectural Board.

WATERING YOUR LAWN

How often should you water your lawn? Water your lawn as needed to keep the soil moist to a two to three inch depth. TIP: You can measure this by inserting a nail or screwdriver into the soil, which should easily penetrate soil that's properly moist.

Symptoms of inadequate water are easily seen: your grass slowly loses its bright green color and starts to fade to yellow. Additional stress will cause it to turn tan, indicating drought dormancy. You may also notice wilting, which causes grass blades to roll or fold. If you walk across your lawn and your footprints remain in the grass, or lawn mower tracks remain visible, your lawn needs water.

Established lawns should be watered deeply, but infrequently. Deep watering once a week encourages deeper root growth, while frequent, shallow watering produces a limited root system. When watering, make sure you moisten the top three to four inches of soil, which covers the root zone. Although watering frequency depends on the type of grass, your soil, and the weather, most grasses require about one inch of water each week for healthy growth. The best time to water is in the early morning.

This conserves water that would evaporate if you were to water later in the day, but also allows grass to dry before evening. Grass that remains wet for long periods of time is more susceptible to disease development. If you're using a movable sprinkler, let it run in one spot just until the water begins to run off the surface, then move to a different area of the lawn. Monitor your underground irrigation or sprinkler system to ensure that you moisten the lawn's entire root zone without over-watering any sections. Water the lawn once grass begins to discolor and wilt. If you can't keep the grass green, water your lawn with at least one-half inch of water every 7(seven) to 14(fourteen) days, which will keep the plants alive even if they are dormant. Once your lawn has turned brown and lost all color during drought dormancy, it will take several weeks of steady watering to spur re-growth from the crown area of the plants.

Spring rains are normally sufficient for a healthy lawn and landscape, but if you do need to water during a dry spell, remember to water deeply so the moisture penetrates three to four inches into the soil. The point is to help turf and plants to establish roots deeper into the soil, making them sturdier and more drought resistant. In contrast, shallow rooted plants are more prone to injury from soil compaction and temperature extremes, and they absorb fewer nutrients from the soil.

LAWN MOWING TIPS

The experts at Landscape Institute report that the most common mowing mistakes are mowing too infrequently and cutting grass too short. Here are their tips on proper mowing technique:

Avoid Scalping: Letting grass grow tall and then removing more than 1/3 of the leaf blade is called "scalping" and can damage the lawn. Mowing grass extremely low can also damage the lawn by cutting into the crowns of the plants.

Sharpen Blades: Make sure your mower blades are sharp in order to cut cleanly. Dull blades can shred grass and cause discoloration at the tips because frayed grass blades lose moisture easily. Sharpen the blades of rotary mowers several times each growing season. Reel type mowers usually only require sharpening once a year, but adjust them to ensure they cut cleanly. Some grass species have tough blades, which cause blades to wear quickly.

Be Gentle with Damaged Grass: Raise the mower height a notch or two when mowing a lawn that's recovering from drought, insect damage or disease.

Use Your Grass Clippings: Recycle grass clippings to reduce water loss, lower soil temperatures, and return nutrients to the soil. Plus, you'll save the trouble of bagging and keep clippings out of our already-clogged landfills. In fact, many communities will no longer accept grass clippings in household trash.

Don't Cut Wet or Wilted Grass: Avoid cutting wet grass, which can cause brown spots because clippings clump together and smother your lawn. Cutting wilted grass, particularly during the hottest part of the day, can also cause severe damage to your lawn.

Know When to Mow: The best guide for mowing frequency is the growth of your grass. Plan to cut less than one-third of the grass blade in one mowing. Keep in mind that certain grasses, such as Bermuda grass, zoysia grass and centipede grass, require close mowing to stay healthy. Allowing these grasses to grow too high will promote thatch development.

So You Missed a Mowing: During periods of rapid growth, lawns may require mowing as frequently as every three to four days. Of course, sometimes we just don't have time to mow as often as we'd like. If your grass has grown too high, reset your mower to its highest cutting level. Three or four days later, reset the mower to cut at the normal height and mow your grass again.

FIRE ANTS

Fire ants can be dangerous, especially to small children, pets and those individuals who are allergic to their sting. Even for those who are not allergic, fire ant stings are painful and can easily become infected. More than nine million people are stung every year. In addition to being harmful to people and pets, fire ants also damage lawns. Their unsightly mounds smother grass, make mowing difficult and can even chip mower blades. What's more, their underground tunnels disturb roots, dry the soil and cause grass to thin. There are many products available today to help curb the spread of fire ants. Using these products frequently will help reduce the amount of unsightly mounds and reduce infestations.

AERATION AND SEEDING

Core aeration is a key turf grass management tool to improve the overall health and appearance of all grass types. Warm season turf lawns should have core aeration completed around the end of May to July. Aeration will help improve soil compaction, air circulation, water and nutrient uptake. In addition, it will prevent thatch buildup and decrease disease pressure. Lastly, aeration will help increase turf density and fill in thin areas on warm season turf that may have received damage. Core aeration on *fescue* should be done when you are seeding the lawn in the *fall*.

Here is an example of a simple Maintenance Schedule:

MARCH: Lawn Fertilizer with Crabgrass Prevention

MAY: Lawn Fertilizer with Weed Control and Lime if you have acidic soil

JULY: Lawn Fertilizer with Insect Control

SEPTEMBER: Lawn Fertilizer

OCTOBER: Late in the month Seed your lawn

DECEMBER: Mid Month put down a Winterizing product

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ARTCHITECTURAL BOARD

CEDAR MANAGEMENT GROUP

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