



**GRAFF'S
TURF FARMS**

We Grow with You in Mind!



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Stadium

WHEN To Water Turfgrass Sod

Begin watering new turfgrass sod within 1/2 hour after it is laid on the soil. Apply at least 1 inch of water so that the soil beneath the turf is very wet.

- Tip #1:** Pull back a corner of the turf and push a screwdriver or other sharp tool into the soil. It should push in easily and have moisture along the first 3 or 4 inches. If not, you need to apply more water.
- Tip #2:** Make absolutely certain that water is getting to all areas of your new lawn. Corners and edges are easily missed by many sprinklers and are particularly vulnerable to drying out faster than the center portion of your new lawn. Also, areas near buildings dry out faster because of reflected heat and may require more water.
- Tip #3:** Runoff may occur on some soils and sloped areas before the soil is adequately moist. To conserve water and ensure adequate soak-in, turn off the water when runoff begins, wait 30 minutes to 1 hour and restart the watering on the same area, repeating this process, until proper soil moisture is achieved. For the next 2 weeks keep the below-turf soil surface moist with daily (or more frequent) waterings. Especially hot, dry or windy periods will necessitate increased watering amounts and frequency.
- Tip #4:** As the turf starts to knit its new roots into the soil, it will be difficult, impossible and/or harmful to pull back a corner to check beneath the turf (Tip #1), but you can still use a sharp tool to check moisture depth by pushing it through the turf and into the soil.
- Tip #5:** Water as early in the morning as possible to take advantage of the daily start of the grass's normal growing cycle. Mornings have lower wind speeds and your lawn will have considerably less loss of water because of high temperature evaporation.
- Tip #6:** If the temperature approaches 100°F or high winds are constant for more than half of the day, reduce the turf surface temperature by lightly sprinkling the area. This sprinkling does not replace the need for longer, deeper watering, which will become even more critical to continue during adverse weather conditions.
- Tip #7:** Infrequent and deep watering is preferred to frequent and shallow watering because the roots will only grow as deeply as its most frequently available water supply. Deeply rooted grass has a larger "soil-water bank" to draw moisture from and this will help the grass survive drought and hot weather that rapidly dries out the upper soil layer.

A Quick Reference Guide is as follows for first 30 days:

- Week #1: Water 2-3 times per day
Week #2: Water 1-2 times per day
Week #3: Water every day or every other day
Week #4: Water 2-3 times per week to establish your ongoing schedule

HOW To Water New Turfgrass Sod

Avoid hand sprinkling. Most people do not have the patience, time, or "eye" to adequately measure what is being applied across any larger areas of lawn.

Understand the advantages of different sprinkler designs. Each type has its advantages and disadvantages and its proper use will be determined by the type of sprinkler you select:



- **In-ground sprinkler systems:** These systems require professional design and installation, routine adjustments and regular maintenance to be most effective and efficient. The greatest mistake is the "set it and forget it" philosophy that fails to account for changing seasonal water requirements to maximize turf growth and allows operation during or following a rain storm. Another frequent problem is when sprinkler heads get out of alignment and apply water to the sidewalk, street, or house-siding, rather than to the lawn.

- **Hose-End Sprinklers:** These range in complexity, cost and durability, but are highly portable and can provide uniform and consistent coverage when properly placed on the yard and adequately maintained.

- **Regardless of your choice of sprinklers, keep in mind these tips:**

- 1) Sprinklers that do not throw water high into the air are usually more efficient.
- 2) Perform routine maintenance several times during the growing/watering season. Check for blocked outlets, leaking or missing gaskets, or misaligned sprinkler heads.
- 3) Select sprinklers and systems for uniformity of coverage across whatever area they are designed to water.

Verify watering uniformity. This can be accomplished with 4 to 6 flat-bottomed, straight-sided cans (ie. tuna fish, cat food), a ruler and a watch:

- **Step #1:** Arrange the cans at random distances away from any sprinkler but within the coverage area.
- **Step #2:** Run the sprinkler for a specific amount of time (e.g. half-hour) or run the water until a specific amount of water is in at least one can (e.g. 1/2 inch).
- **Step #3:** Measure the water in each can. Some variation is expected, but a difference of 10% or more between any 2 cans must be addressed by replacing or adjusting the sprinkler or relocating the system.

Watering on slopes. See Watering Tip #3.

Watering under and near trees. Know the water requirements for the specific trees, as well as for the grass. Despite having deep "anchor" roots, trees take up moisture and nutrients from the top 6 inches of soil...the same area as the grass. Watering sufficiently for the grass may over-water some varieties of trees and under-water others. A common solution is to not plant grass under the drip-line of trees, but rather use that area for perennial ground-covers, flower beds or mulch beds.

HOW MUCH Water Is Applied & Needed

The amount of water your lawn requires and receives will determine its overall health, beauty and ability to withstand use and drought. Keep in mind that too much water can ruin a lawn just as fast as too little.

Standard water requirements. One inch a week is the standard for most lawns; however, this will vary between different turf species. There will also be varying water requirements for seasonal changes and still more differences because of different soil types.

Determine water needs. Grass in need of water will have a gray-blue cast, rather than a blue-green or green color. Footprints will still appear after 1/2 hour or more on a lawn in need of water, while on a well-watered lawn, footprints will completely disappear within minutes.

Use a soil probe. A screwdriver or large spike can be used to determine how dry your lawn is. If the probe can be pushed into the soil easily, it's probably still moist, but if it takes a lot of pressure to push in, it's time to water.

Verify watering quantities. Use the same measuring method described above, except note the *time* it takes for the cans to collect a specific amount of water. Eg: If 1/4 inch collects in 30 minutes, it will take 1 hour to apply 1/2 inch of water or 2 hours to apply 1 inch.

Water timers. Timers can help provide consistency and be programmed to turn off when no one is awake or at home. Some timers measure just the amount of time water is flowing through the device and you have to calculate how long to set the timer (see above). Other units measure the number of gallons of water flowing through it. Knowing that 600 gallons per 1,000 square feet equals 1 inch of water will help you calculate the timer settings.

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