

Drought and Your Garden, Lawns

This is will be a series of articles throughout the summer.

As Americans we love our lawn! Did you know that if lawn (not ball fields and parks) were an agricultural crop it would be the number one crop in the United States? Wow, that's a lot of grass to mow and throw in the green waste.

Warm season grasses such as Bermuda grass are more drought efficient than cool-season grasses such as tall fescue and rye grass. Bermuda grass may survive several weeks of dryness. Cool season grasses may die within a month or two of no water. During a drought, gradually reduce the amount of water to your lawn to one-half of what you are currently irrigating.

An easy way to determine if your lawn needs water is to walk across the grass. Turn around and look for your footprints. Do you see them? If yes, it's time to irrigate. If not, it's not time to irrigate.

Here are some lawn maintenance tips:

Water at night, ideally between 9 pm and 6 am, this reduces evaporation, and the wind will not be strong enough to interfere with sprinkler patterns.

Reduce your lawn irrigation in half. You don't have to stop irrigating your lawn.

Don't let the water run into the gutter. No matter how much you irrigation concrete it will not grow.

Raise the height of your mower. Taller grass blades shade each other reducing evaporation.

Do not fertilize your lawn! Fertilizer increases growth which increases the need for water. Lawns in California rarely need fertilizer.

Good luck! A few simple changes can reduce your water bill and have a great looking lawn.