

Welcome to the second edition of the Monmouth County Commercial Nursery and Landscape email newsletter. Diane and John will be keeping you updated on timely horticultural information through these regular emails. Contact them for further information on these topics or for any other inquiry.

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Lawn Irrigation

I have been involved in this business since the 1970's. You would think by this time watering would be an easy task, turn the water faucet on, water the plants and done. I am referring to the management of irrigation to conserve water, reduce diseases and promote growth and health of plants.

How many of us felt the need to water our lawns this spring? We rushed to turn the irrigation system on in April. I'm not saying this was not needed, it depends on the situation. Please find the following information useful as printed in the Best Management Practices for Watering Lawns fact sheet:

Many factors influence lawn water requirements, and no two lawns are identical. A healthy, high quality lawn may need up to 1¾ inches of water per week to keep it growing vigorously under hot, dry, windy summer conditions.

WATERING EFFICIENTLY

Application of Water

Each time you water the lawn, apply enough water to moisten as much of the root zone as possible. Use a soil probe or shovel to determine the average rooting depth in your lawn. If the roots grow down 6 inches, water until the soil is moistened to that depth.

If the soil has a considerable amount of clay, apply 1 to 1½ inches of water to moisten to a 6-inch depth. Sandy soils hold less water therefore you should apply about ½ inch of water to wet the soil to the 6-inch depth.

Frequency of Watering

Turf grown on sandy soil must be watered more often than the same grass grown on clay or loam soils. Even after a thorough watering, sandy soils hold less plant-available water and require more frequent irrigation with a smaller amount of water. Conversely, turf growing on a loamy-clay soil can be irrigated less frequently with larger quantities of water.

Time of Day

The most efficient time of day to water is early morning (between 3 a.m. and 8 a.m.). It is generally less windy, cooler, and more humid at this time, resulting in less evaporation and a more efficient application of water.



This turfgrass is showing signs of stress due to irrigation heads not evenly watering the lawn

Reminder: The Lawn, Landscape & Sports Turf Field Day and Trade Show will be held on **Wednesday, August 1st** at the Adelpia Plant Science Facility, 594 Halls Mill Road, Freehold NJ. Registration & Trade Show opens at 7:30 am and field tours and equipment demonstrations will run from 9 am – 1 pm. Lunch will be provided from 1 - 2 pm and an optional pesticide recertification core session will be given from 2-2:30 pm. Pesticide recertification credits will be awarded for NJ, NY, CT, DE, MD and PA. To register on-line (or to print the registration form) and for additional information about the field days go to www.njturfgrass.org

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The Summer Plant Symposium will be held on **Tuesday, August 14th** at Rutgers Gardens in New Brunswick. Presented by the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Plant Association, participants can choose several sessions, including a garden center tour, landscape design tour, and landscape industry classes which will also offer pesticide credits. To register online and for more information, go to <http://summerplantsymposium.com/registration/>

Water pressure is usually better at night resulting in a more uniform application of water through sprinklers Seasonal Need for Watering.

Based on historical records of rainfall, established lawns in New Jersey usually need watering to maintain vigorous growth during the months of June, July, and August. In occasional years, watering during other months maybe needed.

CULTURAL INPUTS RELATED TO WATERING

Mowing

Two important aspects of mowing are height and frequency. The preferred mowing height for most lawn species in New Jersey is 2½ to 3 inches. Mowing less than 2 inches decreases drought and heat resistance

Fertilization

Fertilizers must be used correctly; otherwise the practice will be ineffective or wasteful. Nitrogen (N) is the most important nutrient for promoting good turf growth, Excess nitrogen fertilization, however, will cause excessive shoot growth and limit root growth.

This spring Dave Pease, General Manager Monmouth County Park System Golf Courses, invited me to Hominy Hill Golf Course. During several tours he spoke of allowing the grass plant to stress, the night temperatures are such the plant will be fine. He talked of how many of our (referring to the turf industry) irrigation practices encourage weeds like annual bluegrass and discourage a strong healthy grass root system.

The following information is taken from the Landscape, Nursery, and Turf Edition of the Plant and Pest Advisory Dated July 12, 2012. (See the following link for information <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/plantandpestadvisory/>)

Plant Diagnostic Laboratory Update Richard J Buckley, Director Plant Diagnostic Laboratory

We've had some significant heat stress over the last couple weeks and are very dry. In fact, with the exception of some local thunderstorms, rainfall has been negligible in July. These conditions are always preferable to a turf manager. Dry weather means one can control the moisture, that is, if one can control the moisture. Many of our samples in the last two weeks are simply plugs from golf greens that dried down too far. For instance, last Friday (6th) the afternoon temperatures were in the upper 90°F's, the wind was blowing at 9-14 mph and the relative humidity was down somewhere near 35%, so the grass was under significant evaporative stress. A lot of turf managers fell off the tightrope that day and cooked their turf. Generally what follows is panic and overwatering to try to bring it back. Almost all the samples this week were either rock hard "hockey pucks" or soaking wet "sponges." Either way, the grass is on its way out. Interestingly enough, folks that stay dry after the stress end up with anthracnose and those that water vigorously to recover get root-pythium. It is dry, so you have control, but don't fall into the too dry/too wet trap!

In landscape turf, the disease of the week was brown patch. High night temperatures, regular irrigation inputs, and perennial ryegrass helped that disease along.