

## Tips To Help You Have a Great Lawn

### **Troubleshooting:**

Grass needs well drained soil to grow and look its best. Areas that collect water are likely to produce shallow-rooted turf and will be more susceptible to root rot (fungus) and drought. These spots, if not too extensive, may be best devoted to water tolerant ornamentals.

**If you see areas of turf dying off, bring in a dinner-plate size sample of the grass. Make sure the sample is composed of half dead and half alive grass. If you only bring in dead grass, all we will be able to tell is that the grass died.**

If you have weeds you need to know how to kill, bring in a sample of the freshly pulled weed.

### **Shaded Areas:**

Sun is very important to good grass growth. All grasses do well in full sun. Generally, the shady spots are likely to have more problems.

If an area of the landscape has more than 25% shade, it may be a very tough spot for grass to grow. In these spots you must select turf very carefully to make sure it is highly shade tolerant. (i.e. Seville St. Augustine)

### **Watering:**

How long should you water? 20 minutes? 30 minutes? 45 minutes? Unfortunately time is not an accurate measurement for how much water your lawn should receive. Each watering system is different, coverage must be checked, and water pressure is different at different times of the day.

Your lawn should be getting ½ inch to ¾ inches of water at each watering. Below is an easy to check the amount of water your lawn is receiving:

The night before you water, or right before the time you normally water, set out several small Dixie cups throughout the yard. This will allow you to measure how much the lawn is getting.

If some containers have a little water and some have a lot of water, your irrigation system needs some attention. Adjustments may need to be made with the heads, check for obstructions or other problems.

Keep repeating the above test until your lawn is being watered properly.

A lack of adequate water, even when you think you are watering carefully, can lead to unexpected dry spots and declining turf. Try to verify the irrigation system is working correctly at least once a month.

The best time to water is usually between 2am and 8am. **DO NOT WATER AT NIGHT!** (You do not want future fungus problems.)

Watering the lawn too long or too often will not encourage a deep root system. In fact the lawn will have a harder time surviving through a period of drought.

### **Mowing:**

Letting the grass grow very tall and then mowing is a mistake. Removing more than one third of the leaf blade can stress turf grass, make lots of clipping, and result in yellowing of the grass.

Cutting the lawn too short is another big mistake; it really hurts the lawn. It can reduce the size of the root system.

The taller the leaf blade, the deeper the root system. The deep root system increases the amount of water and nutrients the grass can absorb. Also due to the improved root system, the turf is more resistant to insects, nematodes and disease.

Most lawn mowers do not go high enough for St. Augustine grass (4 inches), so an extension kit for the mower is recommended.

Sharp mower blades give the best looking lawns. Check the grass after mowing for signs of torn ends that indicate a dull lawn mower blade. Dull lawn mower blades make the turf look bad and can cause some pest problems. Diseases love the ragged ends where the tissue is damaged and open to fungal growth.

### **Test The Soil – Every Lawn Needs a Soil Test**

**Soil pH Test** - Determines the acidity or alkalinity and is the first step in lawn care. Soil pH ranges from 0 to 14, and indicates the acidity of the ground. A pH of 7 is neutral, soils with a pH below 7 are acidic and those above 7 are alkaline. Soil pH regulates microbe activity, root growth, overall plant health and nutrient availability. Soil that is too acidic or alkaline will make nutrients unavailable or even toxic and plant growth can be affected. We offer pH testing at our store, ask us for more details.

**Complete Soil Analysis** - At least once, every lawn should have a complete soil analysis completed through a lab. This test will tell us exactly what needs to be corrected in your soil, without guessing. Lab tests are excellent for problems lawns, those with continual fungus problems or other issues. Ask us for more details on how to have a complete soil analysis done.

### **Fertilizing**

Because of our sandy soil, important nutrients such as nitrogen are leached out of the soil rapidly. Following our schedule will make sure you are feeding the lawn what it needs when it needs it.