



# MOUNTAIN HIGH

Tree, Lawn & Landscape Co.

*In Harmony with Nature. In Partnership with You.*

## NEW SOD CARE



### Watering



#### **First 2 Weeks:**

The key to establishing new sod is to keep it properly watered for the first month. Immediately after installing sod, water thoroughly making it spongy to the step. The new sod should be kept thoroughly wet to a depth of 4" to 6" and watered 3 to 5 times a day during the first 7 to 14 days depending on season. Lift a corner of the sod to determine the depth of moisture. The first week, it is very important to keep the new sod damp. During this time stay off the sod so it can take root and you do not sink in and leave depressions from your foot steps. During hot weather, sprinklers should run several times a day so the new sod never dries out. If allowed to dry out the sod will shrink, brown and can die. The roots of your new sod will penetrate the soil faster and root down sooner if properly watered. At the end of week 2, dry up the yard enough so you can mow.

#### **Weeks 3 & 4:**

The following 2 weeks are used to transition from frequent daily watering to fewer cycles per day and increase the number of days between watering. During week 3, start reducing watering to 1-3 times per day and skip a day between watering if new sod is not drying out. By week 4, water 1-2 times every other day. After week 4, your new yard should be ready to go 2-3 days between watering. Water your lawn in the evening, night and early morning when less evaporation occurs. To reduce run-off on hills and promote deep root growth, reduce watering times in half. One hour later, run the irrigation cycle again and apply the rest of the water. This allows the water to soak into heavy soils.

#### **Rest of the Season:**

Your new lawn will need more water the first growing season and especially the first 6 months. As it roots deeper over the course of a year, it will need less water. If your lawn looks dry, it probably needs watering. The key to new sod care during this time is deep watering less frequent. This will help the roots grow down and develop a deep root system that uses less water. It is OK after the first two months to stress your lawn a little. This means let your yard dry out a bit and when you see signs of stress starting to appear, then water. This will also allow you to fine tune the sprinkler system and adjust heads for proper coverage and change nozzles for more or less water in certain spots.



### First Mowing



Your new lawn should be mowed at the end of week 2 or if your lawn exceeds 3 1/2" tall. Back off the water so the turf is dry to the touch and firm enough to walk on without sinking in. If your new lawn reaches over 3 1/2", mow off a third of the length even if it has not been two weeks. Do not cut shorter than 2" for the first few times you mow. Exercise caution the first time you mow so you do not damage or pull up the sod. If some of the sod does move around, don't worry. Just put it back in place and it will grow in.



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## ESTABLISHED LAWN CARE

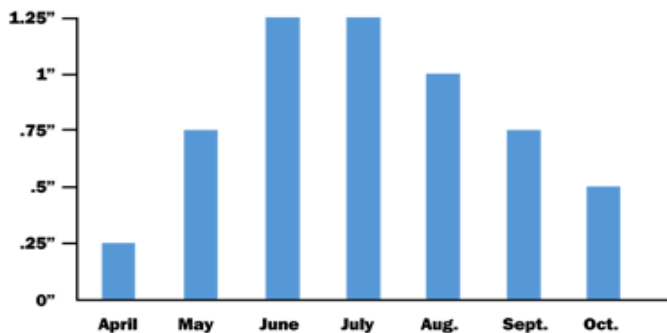


### Watering:

Watering your established lawn varies depending on the time of year, weather, sun, shade, slope, wind and temperatures. Watering uniformly, deeply and infrequently will help keep your lawn healthy. Judgment and common sense are important in determining when your yard needs water. A healthy, deep rooted lawn attained through less frequent, deep irrigation, often withstands minor drought better than an over-watered lawn. It is important to water if your lawn if it dries out and becomes drought-stressed between waterings. The following are signs your lawn needs watering:

- 1st Stage — Grass blades turn bluish gray in color
- 2nd Stage — Footprints left when walked on
- 3rd Stage — Grass blades turn straw color

If any of these stages start to appear in your yard, it needs water. You can also use a screwdriver to determine how much moisture in your soil profile. If the screwdriver goes in easy, it should have good moisture. If it is hard to push it into the yard, your lawn may be dry. During times of extreme summer heat, your established lawn may need to be watered 3 to 4 times a week. Also, a lawn growing in sandy soil will need to be irrigated more often with smaller amounts of water. Sandy soils hold little plant-available moisture. Turf growing in a clay soil can be irrigated less frequently.



**Inches of Water per week for the Average Yard**

*Example: In May, you need .75" of water per week & you feel it would be best to water 3 times a week. You would apply .25" of water per watering. If the sprinkler put on 1" per hour, you would run the zone for 15 minutes*

### Best Time To Water?

The most efficient time to water is late evening, after 9 p.m. and early morning before 5 a.m.. It generally is less windy, cooler and more humid at this time, resulting in less evaporation and more efficient use of water. Water pressure is generally better and this results in optimal distribution patterns. Watering at night does not encourage disease development in Colorado due to the dry climate.

### Other Watering Tips

With most soils, do not apply all the water in one cycle or in a short period of time. If water is applied too quickly, it will often run off turf areas due to slopes, compaction, heavy clay soils and thatch. In these cases, it is more effective to apply half the water in two back to back irrigations cycles. This allows water to soak into the soil rather than run off. Core cultivation, aeration can resolve some infiltration problems by reducing thatch and reducing compaction.

### Mowing

Mow cool season grasses 1.75" to 3" tall when the turf is dry to the touch with a sharp blade. A dull mower blade will shred and fray leaf blades instead of cutting them cleanly. The result is a brown, unattractive lawn. Mow often enough so no more than 1/3 of the grass height is removed at any single mowing. If your mowing height is 2 inches, mow the grass when it is 3 inches tall. You may have to mow a healthy bluegrass or fescue lawn every three to four days during ideal growing conditions. If weather or other factors keep you from mowing your lawn, raise the height of cut to avoid cutting too much off at one time. Cut the grass again a few days later at the normal mowing height. Pick up the clippings if they form clumps and are matting down and smothering your lawn.

During routine mowings, let the grass clippings fall back onto the lawn. Grass clippings decompose quickly and provide a source of recycled nutrients and organic matter for the lawn. Mulching mowers can do this easily. Side-discharge rotary mowers also distribute clippings effectively if the lawn is mowed at the proper frequency. Grass clippings do not contribute to thatch accumulation.

### Fertilizer

To supply proper nutrition for your lawn, we suggest applying three to four applications of fertilizer per year. Depending on the weather, these applications should be made in March, May, July, and September. How often and what type of fertilizer you use will determine the health of your lawn. If you are watering properly but your lawn is thin, lighter green in color or is not growing well, your lawn needs to be fertilized. We suggest applying a high analysis fertilizer when your lawn needs a boost. If your lawn is thick and healthy use a slow release fertilizer.

High analysis fertilizers green up you lawn quickly, promote top growth and root development. Slow release fertilizers work slower and release nutrients over a longer period of time. Organic fertilizers work even slower because the organic components must break down before the plant can utilize them. Also, use a fertilizer that is formulated for Colorado soils and our dry climate. We have been selling fertilizers for Colorado for over 40 years. With a minimal amount of work, your lawn will look great and stay healthy.

Resource: <http://www.gvt.net> <http://csuturf.colostate.edu/Pages/homelawnca.htm>