

Soft and Squishy Lawns?

Too much water is trouble for lawns
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The months of July and August mark the peak of our rainy season with a combined average of about eighteen and a half inches of rainfall. This is great news for thirsty lakes and underground water reservoirs. However, it could be bad news for your lawn, especially if the automatic sprinkler system is still routinely operating.

When you walk across your lawn is it soft, spongy, "squishy," and water-soaked? If so, your lawn is probably suffering from too much water. Excessive water promotes rapid growth of lawns, weeds such as sedge and dollar weed, fungus and root rot; shrubs get leaf spot, die back and root decline. Lawns without good drainage become soft and muddy especially in drainage swales between homes.



Water -Soaked Lawn

Watering Restriction in Unincorporated Lee:
 Odd addresses--Wednesday &/or Saturday
 Even addresses--Thursday &/or Sunday
 No watering between 10 am and 4 pm.

We cannot do much about the rainy season, but we can manage our sprinkler systems to not add to the problem of too much water. The following are a few practical tips to help prevent over watering of your lawn.

1. Install a rain sensor shut-off switch to prevent your automatic irrigation system from operating during and after a rainfall. One can be bought for around \$25, anywhere irrigation supplies are sold or an irrigation contractor can install one for you. It will pay for itself! Research has shown they will save 17 to 24 percent of your irrigation water. If you already have one check to see that it is adjusted to the 1/2-inch setting and test it to verify it will stop irrigation if water is poured over it.

2. Water as Needed. Currently we are on a twice-a-week schedule but do not make the mistake of watering on every allowed day; instead water on an as-needed basis. Use a rain gauge to know if 1/2-inch or more rain has occurred a day or two before your allowed day. If so, turn the controller off and skip an irrigation to help prevent over watering. True, the rain sensor shut off switch should take care of this but there is no substitute for being aware and involved.

3. How long to water? Most Florida soils need about 3/4-inch of water to moisten the root zone. However, irrigation controller use minutes, not inches of water, for setting the zone run times. This dilemma is easily solved by using 6 to 10 pet food or tuna cans to determine how long it takes to apply 3/4-inch of water in cans. Repeat for all other zones. Zones using spray type sprinklers usually need between 20 to 30 minutes; rotor type sprinklers usually take 60 minutes or more.

Watering Restriction in Cape Coral

For Addresses ending in:
 0 or 1--Monday &/or Saturday
 3,5,7,9--Wednesday &/or Saturday
 2,4,6,8--Thursday &/or Sunday

Water between 12 am and 4 am for addresses ending in 0,3,5,2,4

Water between 4 am and 8 am for addresses ending in 1,7,9,6,4