



## Lawn & Plant Maintenance Guidelines

Proper watering is essential for growing and maintaining your new lawn and plants. Plants are living things, which means that they require care and attention to grow and thrive. Newly planted sod and plants need extra pampering. Without proper care, they will suffer or die. Following these guidelines will protect your investment in your new landscape.

### NEW SOD AND LANDSCAPES:

New sod (grass) needs much more water than most people would think to thrive and survive. In the beginning, you may need to water multiple times per day. Soak your new grass thoroughly and keep it wet. A good, long soaking is better than short, frequent watering because root systems will follow the moisture down into the ground. The roots will establish themselves more quickly and effectively if they have deeper roots in moist soil. Texas wind and heat can dry out new sod very quickly, so it is critical that new sod be watered heavily. You will need to water often (see schedule below), even after rain.

Avoid walking on wet grass. Walking on new, wet grass can cause pits, divots, and a generally uneven surface on your lawn. Sod is especially soft when it is first laid. Whether wet or dry, try to stay off new sod completely for the first 2 weeks after it is laid.

If you have just moved into a new construction home, the irrigation (sprinkler) system has been programmed by the landscape team or irrigator to correctly water the plants. **However, the system should always be checked against the suggested settings in the schedule below.** With lots of different trades and contractors going in and out of a new build home before completion, sprinkler systems sometimes get shut off. It is always a good idea to double check them. Once your landscape is established and you have a better determination of your landscapes needs, you can modify the system. Until then, follow the irrigation schedule below.

Please note that your water bill will be high for the first six months when you are trying to establish the new sod, but it is worth it to establish a lawn that will remain for the lifetime of your

house. It is much more expensive to replace a dead lawn than it is to water it until it is established!

Finally, remember that every landscape is different. Sun/shade position, soil type, and plant type all contribute to the water needs of your individual landscape. Check your landscape at least one to two times a week. Soft, drooping, and yellowing leaves on plants are signs of overwatering, and you may need to cut your watering times back. Crispy yellow or brown leaves and petals are signs of underwatering. If you see that additional water is needed for individual plants, hand watering may be best.

**IRRIGATION SCHEDULE FOR NEW LANDSCAPES:**

Irrigation Type	System Run Time	Spring and Fall	Summer	Winter
Drip System	Flower Beds: 25 – 35 Minutes Sod: 15 – 20 Minutes	Once a day, 3 – 5 times per week (less for cool weather, more for hot)	7 days a week 2 times per day	Once a day, 1 – 2 times per week
Tree Bubblers	4 Minutes	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above
Spray Heads	8 – 12 Minutes	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above
MP Rotors	25 – 35 Minutes	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above
Rotor Heads	35 – 45 Minutes	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above

**\*\*Please note that you may have multiple types of irrigation within your system (ex: tree bubblers, drip, and spray heads)\*\***

**NEW TREES:**

Trees are an expensive investment. It takes many years to grow a tree before it is taken from a tree farm and transplanted at your house. Replacing trees can be very costly, so make sure to give them special care.

When a tree is first planted, it must be watered daily for the first 3 weeks. After that, water 2-3 times a week, or once a week if the temperature is below 70 degrees. After six months, your tree can be considered “established” and you can cut the watering back to 1-2 times a week, including rain events. If you do not have a tree bubbler as part of your irrigation system, hand water with a hose on slow stream at the base of the tree for about 4-5 minutes.

## **ESTABLISHED SOD & LANDSCAPES (OLDER THAN 6 MONTHS):**

Plant watering schedules change with the seasons. Your plants need the most water during summer. During winter, plants still need water even if you cannot see them growing—the growth is happening underground in their root systems.

To keep your grass green and thriving, fertilize your lawn 4-5 times a year. The best way to remember this is to fertilize around the holidays (Valentine’s Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Between Halloween and Thanksgiving). Fertilizing in early Spring and late Fall with a weed & feed that contains a “Pre-Emergent” will help keep weeds at bay.

Any plants and flowers labeled as “seasonal color” or “annuals” complete their life cycle after one growing season. They must be replaced each year to keep your yard looking beautiful and colorful. It is a great opportunity to try out different shapes/colors/varieties of flowers every year and add interest to your landscape.

Every year, your landscape beds will need fresh mulch. This helps retain moisture and reduce weeds in your landscaping. Moisture retention is especially critical in Texas summers when temperatures get to 90+ degrees. Fresh mulch will keep your landscape looking fresh and new throughout the years.

## **SUGGESTED IRRIGATION SCHEDULE FOR ESTABLISHED LANDSCAPES (OLDER THAN 6 MONTHS):**

Season	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
# of Days for Irrigation System	3 – 4 days per week	5 – 7 days per week	3 – 4 days per week	1 – 2 days per week

**\*\*This watering guideline is for established landscapes\*\***

Remember that this is only a guideline – every landscape is different! You may need to adjust due to extreme heat or moisture. If your sod is already established and you are noticing water run-off or excessive moisture, you can cut back the irrigation system. Or, if you are noticing wilting or cracks in the ground, you may need to increase it.

## **IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

Your irrigation system will more than likely contain several different types of watering methods. Please consult your sprinkler system handbook for information on your particular system, or call your irrigation company if you have questions.

Your irrigation system should be set per the irrigation type and solar orientation. If there is a side of your yard that is shady, you can set that zone for a shorter run time.

Do not run your irrigation system in narrow side yards for more than 5 minutes if it is run on a spray zone. Doing so will cause excessive moisture and will drown the grass or cause fungus growth. Most small side yards require only 3 minutes. This will also help alleviate any possible drainage issues that are common among new build homes.

If you have a new irrigation system, it will be equipped with a Rain/Freeze sensor. This sensor will allow you to leave your system on constantly and negate the need to shut off your system if a heavy rain event or freezing occurs. It will automatically skip runtimes based on those weather conditions.

If your irrigation system does not have a Rain/Freeze sensor, and you have NEW sod or landscape, do NOT shut the system off in anticipation of a rain event. Very frequently, people forget to turn their system back on, resulting in dead plants and grass.

### **WATER RESTRICTIONS:**

Many local municipalities institute water restrictions to conserve water supply. Please check with your city or county to see if this applies to you, and follow the outlined regulations. Often, this just means changing the time of day that your sprinklers run, but sometimes it may mean restricting how many days a week you can water.

If drought water restrictions are in place, you may need to run your stations with a lower amount of time set per station multiple times to allow water to soak into the ground while reducing the amount of water runoff and waste. This will help keep the ground moist until your next available watering time.