

How to keep your lawn healthy and avoid wasting water

In the summer months, municipal water use doubles. This is the season when Canadians are outdoors watering lawns and gardens, filling swimming pools and washing cars.

Summer peak demand places stress on municipal water systems and increases costs for tax payers and water users. As water supplies diminish during periods of low rainfall, some municipalities must declare restrictions on lawn and garden watering.

By applying some handy tips, your lawn and garden can cope with drought conditions and you can minimize water wastage.

General Tips

Much of the summer peak demand is attributed to lawn and garden watering. Often water is applied inefficiently, resulting in significant wastage due to over watering, evaporation or run-off. Here are some general watering tips to help avoid wastage:

- Before watering, always take into account the amount of water Mother Nature has supplied to your lawn or garden in the preceding week. Leave a measuring container (empty it once per week) in the yard to help you monitor the amount of rainfall and follow the tips below to help determine how much water to add. Also bear in mind any watering restrictions that may apply in your municipality.
- Water in the early morning, before 9 a.m., to reduce evapora-



tion and scorching of leaves from the sun. Water on calm days to prevent wind drift and evaporation.

- Set up your sprinkler or hose to avoid watering hard surfaces such as driveways and patios. If you're not careful, it's water and money down the drain.
- Water slowly to avoid run-off and to ensure the soil absorbs the water.
- Regularly check your hose or irrigation equipment for leaks or blockages.
- Collect rainwater from your roof in a rain barrel or other large container and keep it covered with an insect screen. Direct the down spout of your eaves troughs into the rain barrel.

Choose an efficient irrigation system. A soaker hose placed at the base of plants on the ground applies water to the soil where it is needed—rather than to the leaves—and reduces evaporation (see Figure 1). Drip or trickle irrigation systems are highly efficient because they deliver water slowly and directly to the roots under the soil surface. This promotes deeper roots, which improve a plant's drought resiliency. If you use a sprinkler, choose one with a timer and that sprays close to the ground.

Tips for Your Lawn

Established lawns (1) generally require about 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water per week to thrive (2). If Mother Nature is providing this amount of rainfall, your lawn

will thrive without supplemental watering. When rainfall does not provide adequate moisture, your grass may start to turn brown. This does not mean it is dead—it's simply dormant. An established lawn will recover and resume its green appearance shortly after sufficient rainfall returns.

Apply these tips to save water and money without compromising the health of your lawn:

- Apply about 2.5 cm of water not more than once per week and skip a week after a good rain. The correct amount can be estimated by placing an empty tuna can on your lawn as you apply water evenly across the surface. When the water level reaches the top of the can, you've applied about 2.5 cm of water which is all your lawn needs. You can time how long it takes to reach this level, then set the timer on your sprinkler.
- Water thoroughly. Deep watering at this rate is better than frequent, shallow watering because it encourages deep roots.
- Don't water your lawn excessively. When it's waterlogged, it may turn yellow and develop fungus and diseases. Oxygen and mineral uptake may be restricted on heavy clay soils. Too much watering can also lead to thatch and fertilizer leaching.
- Check your municipality to see if watering restrictions are in effect.

• Avoid mowing and unnecessary traffic on your lawn when the lawn is dry or dormant.

• Don't cut your lawn too short. Set the blade on your lawn mower to cut no lower than 6-8 cm so that the roots are shaded and better able to hold water.

• Aerate your lawn once a year in the early spring or fall to improve water penetration. Afterwards, topdress by applying a thin layer (max. 15 mm) of organic material and rake to distribute evenly. You can overseed after this to help thicken the lawn.

• A thick, vigorous lawn is the best prevention against weed invasions and can better withstand heat and dryness. A healthy lawn needs nutrients, such as nitrogen. Application rates, sources and timing will depend on many factors including soil type. As a rule, a healthy lawn with good soil needs about ? kg of nitrogen per 100 sq. m. of lawn area every year. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to return nitrogen to the lawn, and reduce moisture loss.

1. Newly seeded or sodded lawns have greater water demands.

2. Actual water requirements depend on individual conditions, such as soil type.

—Article courtesy Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

A FREE MONTHLY PUBLICATION

IN FOCUS

A special section of The Independent & Free Press AUGUST 2007 24 Pages Vol. 1 No. 6

Homecoming 2007 Special Georgetown Homecoming Souvenir Section

WHOA! ... WHAT A PARTY!

Blue Steel was one of 6 bands who volunteered their time to light up the Homecoming stage with local talent that made us all proud to call Georgetown home. See more on pages 4 and 5. Photo by Amy Sykes

Inside INFOCUS

- 3 GDHS Reunion
- 4 Local Bands
- 6 Founder Granddaughter
- 7 Homecoming Committee
- 8 Calendar of events
- 12 Festival on Main
- 14 More Homecoming
- 17 Focus on our Community

HAVE YOU SEEN FOCUS YET?

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

For information on INFOCUS call Ph: 905.873.0301 Fax: 905.873.0398 280 Guelph Street, Georgetown Ontario

also check out... www.infocushaltonhills.ca

AUGUST 2007 WILL BE PUBLISHED THIS WEEK!

Georgetown Volkswagen

203 Guelph Street 905.877.5285 georgetownvw.com

A match remade in heaven.

Some things are better the second time around. Jeans. A broken in leather chair. Our Pre-Loved Volkswagens. They bring with them a wealth of experience and the security of knowing the last owner cared for it. How do we know? Every one of our Pre-Loved vehicles gets a 112-point inspection and is backed by a 2-year/40,000 km limited warranty. We think you'll love it.

Finance on low as **2.9% APR**

\$500 Rebate* for recent college & university grads.

Certified Pre-Loved

*Source: Kelley Blue Book. Volkswagen Finance, as approved credit. Finance rates from 2.9% to 200% based on credit. See dealer for details. *\$500 rebate for recent college and university graduates. Some conditions apply. See Georgetown Volkswagen for complete details. A decent cup of coffee and bit of fun. We'll always happy to help.