

# Dear John:

John Deere Answers Your Lawn and Garden Woes



## A Whale of a Watering Tale

**Dear John: I feel like I'm swimming upstream when I try to keep my lawn watered during a drought. How can I save my lawn?**

**Dear Set Adrift:** Though you may feel like a fish out of water by trying to keep up irrigation during a drought, don't flounder. If you have to scale down your water use and can't provide the recommended inch of water per week, a short-term solution is to let your lawn go dormant and not water at all. Most lawns can handle an occasional dry spell. However, if the surface soil dries out and the drought continues for another four weeks, give the lawn 1/4 to 1/2 inch of water every three weeks to save the root system.

Other schools of thought regarding drought: Don't fertilize, since chemicals can reel in moisture from the soil, and keep weeds away, since they'll lure water from grass roots. Mow your grass a little higher than usual when water is short, so that grass blades can shade the soil and help hold in moisture.

**Dear John: My neighbor aerates his lawn every year. Is that really necessary?**

**Dear Good Neighbor Sam:** Your neighbor is removing small cores of soil from the lawn because soil can become compacted from the weight of people or machinery crossing it. Aeration allows water, air and nutrients to pass freely through the soil to the grass roots.

During aeration, hollow metal tubes are pushed into moist soil to a depth of 3 to 4 inches. It's often recommended that you aerate before applying fertilizer in the fall. Rake up the soil plugs across the lawn to act as a top dressing.

**Dear John: Is there any way to have a beautiful flower garden every year, even though my busy schedule doesn't allow much time?**

**Dear Busy Bee:** If you can spare enough time to plant a perennial flower bed, you'll be rewarded with lovely flowers year after year that don't require constant attention. Unlike annuals, which must be replanted each season, perennials live over the winter and flower again for at least three years.

Finally, by planting a variety of early- and late-blooming perennials, you can have a garden full of color all season.

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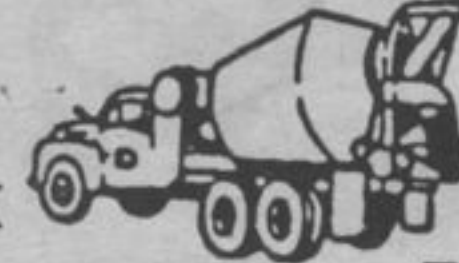
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