



10 Steps to Summer Lawn Survival in a Drought!

Lawns in numerous southeastern states are brown to tan instead of green - the result of drought stress this spring. Permanent relief may not occur for some time. This kind of drought has occurred in 7 of the last 10 years in the south.

Although tan or golden brown instead of the green we expect to see - most of our southern grasses are simply slowing down to minimize the long term negative effects of the drought by going temporarily dormant. This summer dormancy is similar to the dormancy we see in the winter in bermuda, zoysia and centipede lawns - and as we all know, those lawn grasses recover each spring. When rainfall returns or irrigation restrictions are lifted or reduced most zoysia, centipede and bermudagrass lawns will recover their green color and normal growth.

Our experience has shown that certain lawn care activities can reduce the risk of any permanent damage from drought to most summer hardy grasses adapted to the south. The following 10 points of drought affected lawn care can help insure a healthy green lawn - once rainfall and permitted irrigation returns.



- **MOWING** - Reduce frequency or completely curtail mowing on stressed grass that is not irrigated.
- **CUTTING HEIGHT** - If you do continue to mow, raise the cutting height even on irrigated lawns by as much as 50% of normal and make certain the mowing blade is sharp.
- **FERTILIZATION** - Cease fertilization on stressed lawns. Fertilizers will only increase the rate of growth and because of the lack of water severe stress can result.
- **WATER DEEPLY** - When permitted, water as deeply as possible without causing run-off. Light, frequent irrigation is not only less efficient but can result in a shallow rooted, stress prone lawn.
- **BEST TIME OF DAY TO WATER YOUR LAWN** - The most efficient and ideal time to irrigate turfgrass is between midnight and 10:00 A.M. REMEMBER - DO NOT water during windy times; reduce water loss to evaporation by watering when winds are calm.
- **PERIODICALLY INSPECT YOUR LAWN** - During a year of high lawn grass stress from drought, inspecting your lawn becomes even more important. Early detection and control of weed and insect problems is essential to insuring the return of a healthy lawn once rainfall occurs or water restrictions are lifted.
- **GROW DROUGHT TOLERANT GRASSES** - If you are growing a zoysia, centipede or bermuda lawn – consider letting the lawn go dormant – these grasses will recover once rainfall occurs or water restrictions are lifted.
- **FOLLOW THE LAW** - Obey all state and municipal ordinances and restrictions that apply specifically to your lawn and landscape watering.
- **TEMPORARY IRRIGATION EXCEPTIONS FOR NEW PLANTINGS** - Remember, most states and municipalities have made temporary irrigation exceptions for newly installed landscapes that are adequate for establishment of sodded drought tolerant turf. (Example: In many areas of the state of Georgia irrigation can be applied to newly sodded lawns for a period of 30 days. This is enough time to root grasses like zoysia, centipede, St. Augustine and bermuda.)
- **HOW MUCH WATER DOES MY LAWN NEED?** – Generally if turfgrass receives 1 inch of rain in the south and eastern US it will provide a green growing lawn. Remember to reduce any approved irrigation by the amount of rainfall each week. By example if you receive ½ inch of rain in your rain gauge, you will need to apply only ½ of water by irrigation. Remember infrequent deep irrigation is preferred.

Remember lawns produce cool air, oxygen to breath and control dust and mud around the house. It can continue to provide these and many other services if we take proper care year round.



More information is available online at <http://www.LifetimeLawn.com>.

This information is provided as a service by Patten Seed Company – 1.800.634.1672.
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