

# Lawn Care During Periods of Drought Fact Sheet

## MANDATORY WATER CONSERVATION

In Los Angeles, about 40 percent of all water is used on landscaping - much of it for maintaining lawns. Many people water their lawns seven days a week, which is unnecessary and wastes water. Most lawn experts say that lawns will survive on one inch of water per week in temperatures that average 85 degrees, with another half-inch needed for higher average temperatures.

Managing the water you give your lawn during times of drought is critical. For example, a 500-square-foot lawn can use more than 18,000 gallons of lawn annually. By restricting sprinkler watering to the hours before 9 a.m. and after 4 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays only, in keeping with the Water Conservation Law now in effect, there is great potential for water savings. Additionally, prohibition against daytime watering is a good idea as it helps to guard against evaporation during the prime sun hours.

### SIMPLE WAYS TO HEALTHY LAWNS

Simple adjustments to your lawn care will help ensure its health under a two-day-a-week watering schedule. The first step in reducing the amount of water used for the lawn is to assess all aspects of your lawn's growing conditions and your overall lawn care program. Consider taking the following steps:

- Step on your grass. If it springs back when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water. Lawns perform much better under dry conditions than under wet or saturated conditions.
- Mow lawns 2 1/2 - 3 1/2 inches high. Taller grass blades will promote deeper roots and the taller grass will shade the soil, resulting in less water evaporating from the soil.
- Mow weekly so that you don't remove more than the top one-third of the grass blades.
- Don't fertilize. Actively growing plants use more water, and fertilizers can damage already stressed root systems.
- Trim grass adjacent to sprinkler heads to ensure sprinkler spray is not blocked or impeded.
- Check sprinkler heads to make sure they operate properly. Repair broken, bent or sunken heads and clogged nozzles. Adjust spray patterns to prevent sprinklers from watering pavement.
- Keep foot and equipment traffic on lawns to a minimum - drought-stressed turf is more easily damaged by traffic.
- Leave clippings on your lawn as you mow- they will feed small amounts of nitrogen to the soil, providing nutrients to help maintain its health.
- Hand water small dry spots rather than lengthening the sprinkler times, but only in the hours before 9 a.m. and after 4 p.m.

### LOSE THE LAWN?

Los Angeles is a semi-arid climate with about 15 inches rainfall annually. Consider replacing your lawn with native shrubs and groundcover that can be sustained during long dry periods. Another alternative is to install artificial turf. LADWP now offers rebates of \$1 per square foot to customers who replace turf with climate appropriate landscaping. Rebates are currently available to LADWP customers through [www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com) or [www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com) or by calling 1-888-376-3314.