



Chandler • Arizona



WaterSaver Newsletter

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May 2015

How to Train Your Lawn

Summer is approaching fast and that means your landscapes' water needs will begin to increase. One way to make sure your lawn is prepared for the scorching temperatures is to 'train' the roots to grow deep.

Grass roots grow where the soil is moist. If you water your lawn every day, water only moistens the top few inches of soil encouraging shallow roots. By changing your watering schedule a bit, you can train your lawn to establish deeper roots that will help it survive the brutal summer heat and hot, drying winds. Watering deeply (6 - 10 inches) allows the moisture to remain in the root zone longer, which means you don't need to water as often. Irrigating your lawn two to three times a week in summer is all that's needed.

- To check when your grass needs water, do the 'walk test'. Walk on the grass and then look and see if your [footprints](#) remain a few minutes later. If so, it's time to water.
- Make sure you only water when the sun is down or during the cool morning hours to reduce evaporation losses.
- Lush lawns look great, but heavily fertilized lawns use more water and are more susceptible to heat stress.
- Remove only one third of the grass length at each mowing, as cutting too much at once stresses the grass.
- Excessive [thatch](#) is usually caused by over fertilizing or over watering, and too much will actually repel water.
- Check your automatic irrigation system for leaks. Turn your controller on manually and walk your property looking for broken sprinkler heads, missing emitters (which will produce small streams of water) or breaks in irrigation piping or tubing. Details on finding irrigation leaks can be found in the [Smart Home Water Guide](#).

Follow the link to [How to Train Your Lawn](#) and [Desert Lawn Care](#) guide to discover even more ways to make your lawn watering efficient.

Additional [tips for landscaping](#) can be found on the Water Conservation website.

If you have questions about your landscape, contact the Water Conservation Office at conserve@chandleraz.gov or call 480-782-3583.

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Upcoming Events

May 1 - 10
[DBG Butterfly Exhibit](#)
May 2
[Chandler Cinco de Mayo](#)
May 2
[Family Birdwalk at EEC](#)
May 9
[Science Saturday](#)
May 9
[Learn Your Lizards](#)
May 9
[Payson Wildlife Fair](#)
May 9 - 17
[Schnepf Peach Festival](#)
May 16-17
[Prescott Festival](#)
May 23
[Flashlight Tours](#)
See complete schedule at
www.chandleraz.gov/water



Monthly Watering Advice

May

The middle of May through October is considered our summer watering time. Our first 100-degree days of the season occur this month, so now it's even more critical for your plants to be watered properly. These recommendations are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

Lawn watering:

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 4-5 days
- Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - once every 3 days

If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

- Desert Adapted - once every 17 days
- High Water Use - once every 8 days

Tree watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 20 days
- High Water Use - once every 10 days

Shrub watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 14 days
- High Water Use - once every 6 days

Groundcover and vine watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 14 days
- High Water Use - once every 6 days

Cacti and succulent watering - once every 24 days

Annuals watering - once every 3-4 days

****Reduce your landscape watering 30 to 50 percent by adjusting your irrigation each season.**** "[Landscape Watering by the Numbers: A Guide for the Arizona Desert](#)" will help you determine how much water to apply and how long to run your system. Request a free copy at www.chandlerzaz.gov/water or visit the interactive web site at wateruseitwisely.com.

Bonus tip: Refer to page 9 in Landscape Watering by the Numbers to learn how much water your plants need, depending on their size.

Note: These recommendations are general guidelines only and may need to be modified for your specific site conditions.

Ask A Garden Goddess



I've been thinking about installing artificial grass. Are there any drawbacks?

Artificial grass (synthetic turf) can be an alternative to grass in the right situation. It's a good replacement for areas of grass that you never use, yet still want the green look.

However, there are a few precautions. Synthetic turf gets hot, very hot. [Local research](#) shows temperatures registering more than 150 degrees during the peak heat of a summer day. This means children and pets aren't likely to play on it. Some folks use water to cool it down defeating it's water conserving qualities.

It is also expensive and may not be affordable for most people. In addition, there are [health concerns](#) over the amount of arsenic, lead, cobalt, or mercury in the rubber infill.

Email your question to GardenGoddess@chandlerzaz.gov



Water Wise Tips

Grandpa always said " Never make a permanent decision based on a temporary problem."

This time of year folks who overseeded their lawns with winter rye are in the middle of 'transition' when the Bermuda

grass is struggling to grow but is often hindered by rye grass that's still alive.

It's temporary, but it does prevent the Bermuda from coming back as early or as strong because it competes for light and nutrients.

A little 'adjusting' will have your summer lawn flourishing in no time. We asked experts from the University of Arizona's [Karsten Turf Research Facility](#) for tips on spring transition. They say:

- Begin mowing at a lower height to reduce the height of the rye when the minimum nighttime temperature is 60°F or higher for five days in a row.

Plant of the Month

Red Bird of Paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*)

Originally from the tropical West Indies, this shrub makes the landscape come alive with color from May to October.

Clusters of blooms on the branch tips open in shades of gold or fiery orange and turn red with time adding a nice contrast with the feathery foliage. Both hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted to the blooms.



[Red Bird of Paradise](#) thrives in the hottest areas of the landscape, and can survive on little supplemental irrigation. To keep them looking their best and prolong flowering, provide deep watering every week to two weeks while blooming.

Because this shrub can be damaged by temperatures below 30 degrees, canes are often pruned to 12 - 18

- Do NOT stop watering your lawn as this will drastically slow the "new" bermudagrass underneath.
- Consistently water to a depth of 8 inches every 4 - 5 days during May and once every 2 - 3 days in June.
- Fertilize your lawn monthly with 1/2" lb. nitrogen (N) - per 1000 square feet

Follow this link for more information on [spring lawn transition](#).

If you have questions about saving water in your landscape, home, HOA or business, give us a call at 480-782-3580, or email us at conserve@chandleraz.gov

inches tall in January. Established, untrimmed plants can reach a height of over 6 feet and can be easily pruned into a [tree-like form](#) if desired.

This plant performs best in full sun and well-drained soils. At night, the leaflets fold together. The seed pods should not be eaten.



For more landscape choices and design ideas to help you create a vibrant, attractive and colorful low water use landscape, try [Water Wise Landscaping in Chandler](#).

Water Conservation E-News

This monthly newsletter will help you create stunning landscapes that use less water. Each issue is packed with personalized watering advice, notices about upcoming events, timely tips to maintain a healthy landscape, plus ways to reduce your water bill. Read past issues here - [WaterSaver newsletter](#).

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Water Conservation Staff

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Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at conserve@chandleraz.gov



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