

# Fact Sheet: Caring for your lawn

A lush green lawn may look great but have you ever considered the amount of water required to maintain it? Lawns can soak up to 90% of the water used in the garden and more than half of that may then be lost due to evaporation or runoff from over-watering.

Australia's variable climate makes maintaining your lawn year round challenging. Through careful planning and by following some simple tips, you can still achieve a healthy lawn without using excessive amounts of water.

## Plan your garden carefully

By reducing your lawn area by half, you can save up to 55,000 litres of water each year. Replace some areas of lawn with water efficient plants or ground covers, pebbles, a rock garden or paving, and you'll create a more water-friendly garden. Any reduction in your lawn size can make a difference to water usage.

When designing your lawn area, where possible, build driveways, paths and paved areas so that run-off can be directed to the lawn rather than to the stormwater drain.

## Choose a water efficient grass

Planting a lawn type that is hardy in dry weather will help your lawn respond well to local conditions. Indigenous lawns and grasses have evolved to handle our hot and dry summers and so require less watering. Choose a slow growing lawn type with a high drought tolerance to save both water and the time it takes to maintain. The following lawns are some examples of those with a low water demand and high drought tolerance:

- Windsor Green
- Wintergreen
- Greenless Park
- Dawson Creeping Bluegrass

Ask your local nursery or turf professional to advise on the best type of lawn for your garden.

## Give watering a break

The most efficient way to manage your lawn is to give it just enough water to survive. A lawn does not need watering every day and by watering less often, you will help to encourage deeper and healthier roots. To check if your lawn is thirsty, step on the grass and if it springs back after you move your foot then it doesn't need watering.

However, a loss of bright colour and slight wilting means that your lawn needs irrigation. At this stage, you have one to two days to give the lawn a good, deep watering.

**If local restrictions permit**, it is most effective to water either early in the morning or in the evening. At these times, the water will reach the roots and is less likely to evaporate. Never water in the heat of the day.

## Mowing

Try not to cut your lawn too short. Only mow the top third of the leaf area and keep lawns at 2.5cm or higher to encourage deeper and stronger roots. Close mowing can expose the base of the grass and its roots to the sun, which will increase evaporation loss. Also, remember to use your lawn clippings for mulch to assist your garden to retain water.

## Greywater and your lawn

Using greywater to water your lawn and garden may be an alternative to using precious drinking water.

Greywater refers to all non-toilet household wastewater, which is produced from the bath, shower, washbasin, washing machine, dishwasher, laundry trough and kitchen sink.

To properly care for your garden, it is important to understand what is in greywater and how to safely collect it prior to use. Some chemicals found in greywater may be harmful to your lawn so it is recommended that you research this option carefully before you start.

Western Water has produced a free information kit, *Tap into Greywater*, which provides useful information on using greywater at home. Your copy can be obtained by calling Western Water on 1300 650 425 or emailing [mail@westernwater.com.au](mailto:mail@westernwater.com.au). It is also available electronically at [www.westernwater.com.au](http://www.westernwater.com.au)

## Restrictions reminder

Before using any water from the mains supply on your lawn, please remember to check the water restrictions applicable in your local area. Some restriction levels do not permit watering of private lawns.

## For further information

Contact Western Water on 1300 650 425 or visit our website at [www.westernwater.com.au](http://www.westernwater.com.au)

References:

Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)  
Environment Protection Authority (EPA)