



Waterfacts 6

Lawn maintenance.

Healthy lawns that save water start with a healthy base and proper watering techniques.

Aerate: Aeration is the removal of soil cores. It relieves soil compaction, improving water and air movement into the soil, which increases rooting and greatly improves grass health. You can aerate using a manual aerator which you push like a mower, or it can be done automatically by using a powered aerator which you can rent. When to aerate depends on the type of soil and grass you have. If you have clay soil, you should aerate twice a year. If you have sandy soil, you should aerate once a year. If you have warm season grasses, late-spring to early summer is in most cases the best time to aerate. If you have cool season grasses, late summer or early fall is the best time.

Dethatch: Thatch is a layer of organic matter that develops between the green turf and the soil. Although thatch contains some living grass parts, the majority is matted dead grass stems and roots that will not decompose. A layer of thatch 12.5 mm (½") or less is beneficial, however too much thatch can rob the roots of the oxygen and water needed for healthy growth. Remove the thatch from your lawn at least once a year, either in the late Spring or early Fall using a rake, a thatching attachment on your mower or a thatching machine. A lawn care professional may be the best person to remove thatch.

Amend the soil: One of the reasons that people have problems maintaining their lawn during dry weather is poor soil. To improve soil, rake several top dressings of weed-free soil or compost, lightly and evenly over the grass and let it settle in the soil.

Do your part. 
Every drop counts!

CRD Water Services
474-9684 | www.crd.bc.ca/water





Waterfacts 6 - Lawn maintenance



Stop brush cuts: Improper mowing practices cause problems for your lawn. Raise your mower blades so they leave grass about 7 to 8 cm (3 inches) high. Make sure your mower blades are sharp. Don't mow if it is very dry or wet. Leave grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. They add vital nutrients back into the soil.

Fertilizer, herbicides, and other pesticides: When to fertilize depends on climate, grass type and the fertilizer being used. At minimum you should fertilize twice a year but only when your lawn is actively growing. When fertilizing, use organic or organic based fertilizers. Organic fertilizers keep your soil properly balanced for year round health, provide for sustained growth (not bursts of growth), usually cost less and are easier to use. Use herbicides and pesticides sparingly, if at all, and follow all directions for application.

Watering: Lawns not watered in the summer, will go dormant and "golden", but will rebound once fall rains come. If a lawn is to be walked or played on frequently; it needs to be watered during the summer months to handle this wear and tear.

If you water your lawn remember it only needs 2.5 cm (1") per week. Remember to water only in the morning or evening according to the CRD watering bylaw dates and times. This not only follows the bylaw but ensures water is not lost to evaporation which can occur at other times of the day. When you water do not sprinkle your lawn but rather water deeply. (For more information on calculating watering amounts see CRD's How Much Water fact sheet)

Do not use a hose only to water your lawn. Frequent, shallow watering leads to shallow root systems. Grass with shallow root systems is not very drought-tolerant.

CRD Water Services

479 Island Highway, Victoria, BC V9B 1H7
Telephone 250-474-9684, Fax 250-474-4012
www.crd.bc.ca/water

The content of this fact sheet was reviewed for accuracy by an irrigation professional and a landscape designer.



50% post-consumer waste