

Lawn Watering Guide – When & How Much Do I Need to Water My Grass?



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We know how it feels too.

You've just got home from a long day of work, responsibilities, and errands. You're excited to eat the chicken parm you've been thinking about for the last six and a half hours. However, before you can step inside to soak up the pleasant smell and devour your dinner, you notice for the 17th time your grass needs help. Dead or yellowing grass isn't pleasing to see after a long day and if you have kids — no fun to toss the football and play tag on.

Let's fix that!

Many factors play into the health of your lawn such as climate, irrigation, seasonality, and more. Although there's no secret formula to growing grass, there are proven methods to increase your chances! We will discuss these and more next. Follow along to learn how you can keep your grass green all summer; or, start new grass by seed.

How to Know When My Grass Needs Watered?



If your grass is yellow, browning, or dead, then that is a clear sign to water your lawn. Sometimes it's not as obvious as that, though. Observing smaller, more specific changes are required to know if your grass is underwatered. Here are three ways to know when your grass needs watered:

Color Change. This may sound ordinary, but it's time to water your grass when you notice change in color — even when the change is slight. Grayish, dull-green tones typically appear first when your lawn is dehydrated.

Curly Blades. Look at your lawn and observe the grass blades. If you notice them curled or withering, your grass is not hydrated and it's time to water.

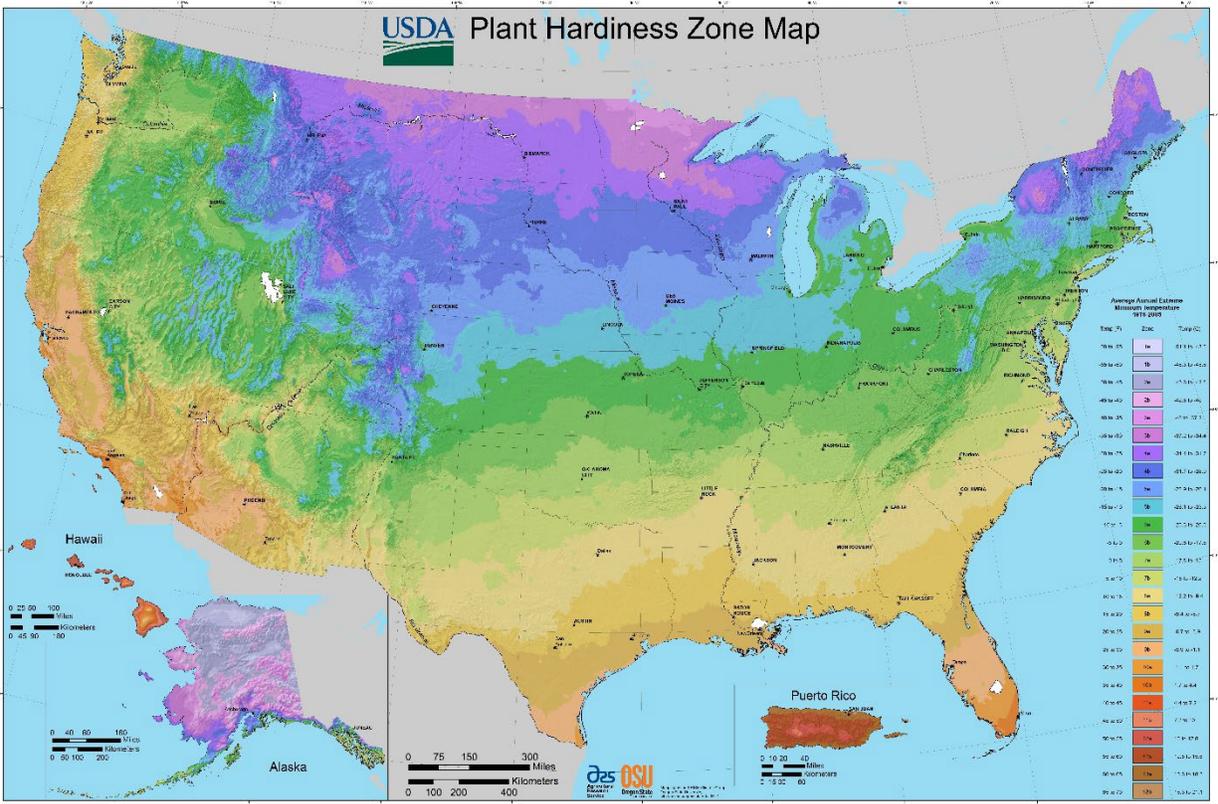
Step Test. The last method involves walking on your lawn. If the footprints you've left behind don't quickly recover back to form, it's because the grass blades lack the moisture they need to bounce back.

When Do I Water My Lawn?

While it may seem you can water your lawn any time of the day; your grass, as well as other plants, requires specialized attention.

Note. It's worth mentioning, though, that watering your grass isn't required. Grass can withstand a lot of abuse and long periods of drought. Lawns that have been well-established and well-cared-for can easily bounce back from weeks of yellow shading (dormant grass). The dormant grass will revive once the rain, or irrigation, returns.

The optimal time to water your lawn is first thing in the morning — before 10:00 AM. If you [live in an area](#) with more sun exposure, consider watering sooner in the morning to catch cooler, less breezy conditions. This allows the water to be absorbed by the grasses roots before evaporation occurs. If you must wait to water your grass in the afternoon, we recommend doing so between 4:00 – 6:00 PM.



Interested In Making Better Watering Decisions? Use our [Plant Hardiness Zone Calculator](#) to discover climate trends in your region (data available only for US and Puerto Rico only).

Why Not Just Wait Until Dusk?

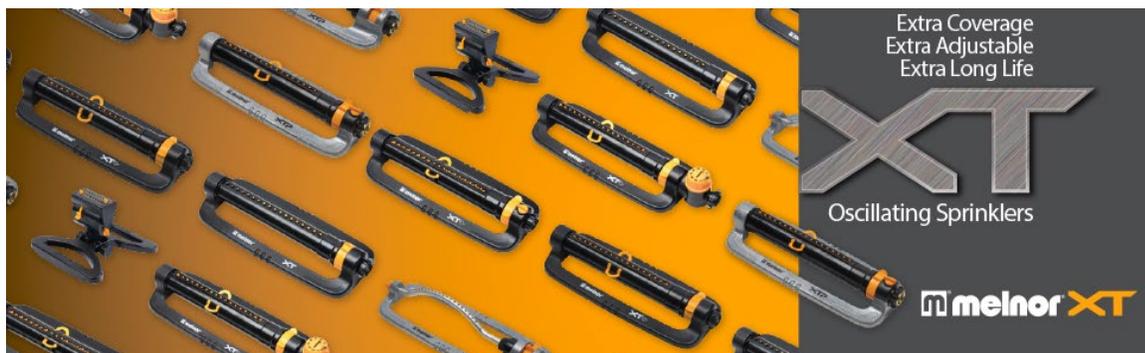
The later you water in the day, the more likely disease will spread in among your grass. This is because many fungal and bacterial plant diseases rely on moist foliage to reproduce.

How Much Water Do I Use?

HOW MUCH TO WATER



Common practice is to water an established lawn until the top 6-8 inches of soil (where most grass roots develop) are saturated. To provide enough water that will reach this depth, most lawns require 1 to 1.5 inches of water each week, either from rain or from [hose-end watering methods](#). This amount of water can be administered in a single watering (recommended) or split between two waterings during the week (not recommended). Ensure not to overwater and that each section of your grass is hit.



The [XT line](#) of Oscillating Sprinklers by Melnor® come equipped with features like flow control, built-in timer, and 360° degree watering for full coverage. Consider

Why are split waterings not recommended? Split waterings increase the likelihood that your grass will develop diseases from continuous moisture. Letting your grass dry and soak up the water in the soil will promote the most growth. Tools are available that will assist you in maintaining proper moisture levels.



Tools such as Soil Moisture Sensors, like the [ones made by Melnor](#), do a great job of monitoring the moisture of your soil so you never

overwater your grass. This can be especially helpful if you live in an area like California that [fines individuals \\$500](#) for watering lawns within 48 hours after a rainstorm. With the Soil Moisture Sensor, you'll know that you won't need to water.

How to Tell If I've Watered Enough?

Once you have watered your grass, you might be curious if that's enough. There are four easy ways to check:

Measure With Tubs. This method is the most straightforward. Gather and place empty tubs (or whatever you can find) around your lawn in different spots. Measure how long it takes for those tubs to accumulate 1 to 1.5 inches of water. If you are using sprinklers to water your lawn, make sure to use the average time it takes to fill all the tubs because the coverage patterns may vary around the grass.

Check The Soil. Using a stick, assess how deep the absorption level has moved during your initial watering to see how long it will take to soak the soil. Once the wetness has reached a depth of at least six inches, make a note of the time; this is how long you need to water your grass in the future. If you forget to water your grass one day and want to know if it's okay, try inserting that stick into your soil. If you're not able to easily insert your stick six inches deep, you need to water your lawn.

Check Your Flow Rate. This method requires math but will get you the same result. First, simply multiply the [square footage](#) of the section of grass you plan to grow by 0.93 (1.5 inches of water per sq ft). This will give you the total water required to adequately water your grass. Next, take this number and divide it by your Melnor® [sprinkler's](#) flow rate (GPM). This will tell you the number of minutes required for watering time to reach 1.5 inches of water per square foot.

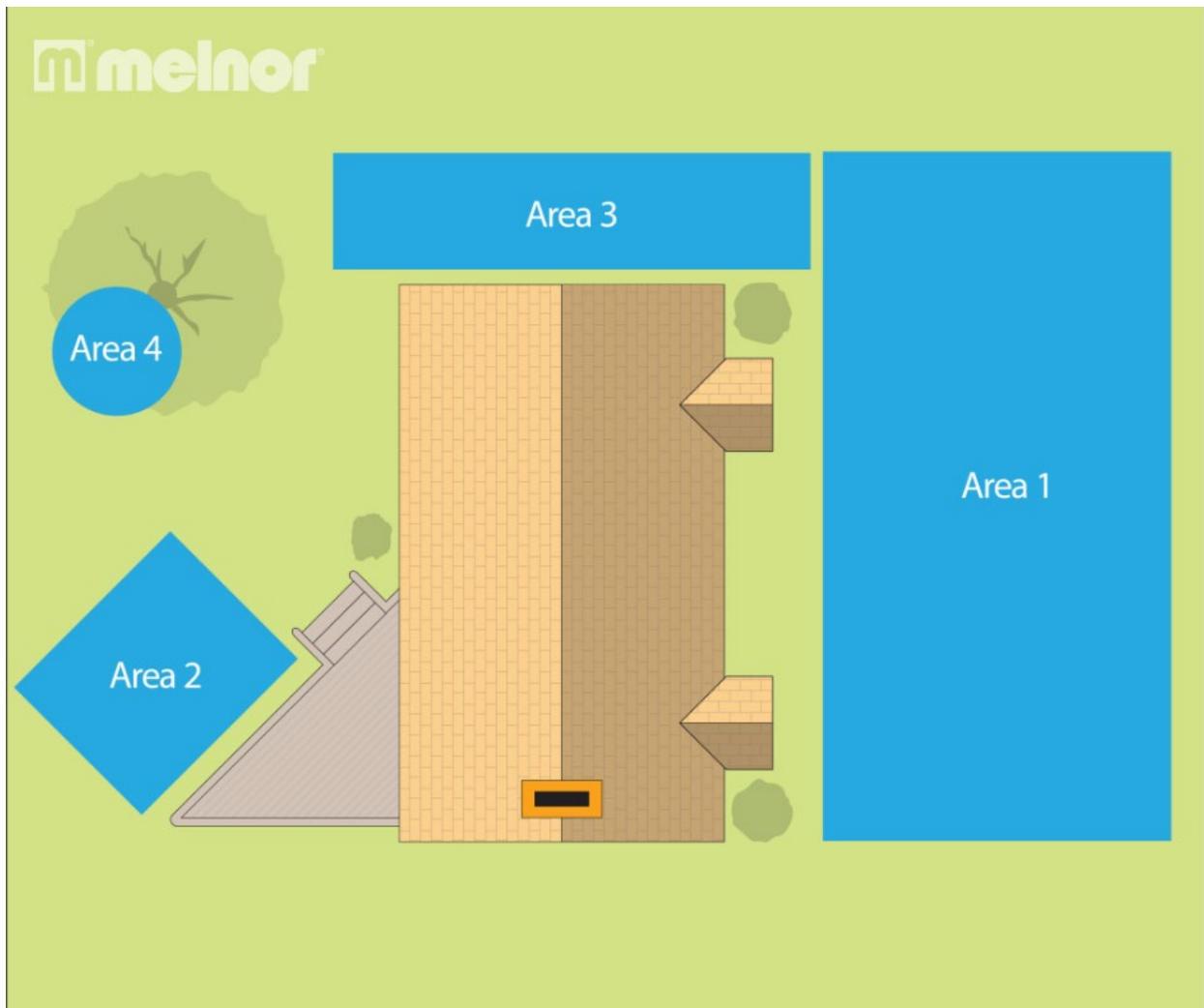
Formula:

Step 1

Section of Grass Sq. Ft.	x	Gallons Required to cover 1.5 inches/Sq. Ft.	=	Total Water Required
X	x	0.93	=	X

Step 2

Total Water Required	/	Melnor Sprinkler Flow Rate (GPM)	=	Total Minutes Required
X	/	X	=	X



Don't know the square footage of your section? Use our [lawn size calculator](#).

Use Water Timers. The last way to check if you watered your lawn enough involves water timers. Choose a water timer, such as the [Melnor® Flowmeter Water Timer](#), that can measure your water flow in hundreds of gallons. Then, take that number and divide it by the square footage of the section you are trying to water by 0.93 (1.5 inches of water per sq ft). This will give you the total water required in gallons of water. Once you have that number, simply turn the water timer's knob to the amount of water you need to dispense.

Example:

500 Sq. Ft. (20 ft. x 25 ft.) x 0.93 (1.5 inches of water per Sq. Ft.)
= X (Total Water Required in Gallons)



Note. The [Flowmeter Water Timer](#) by Melnor® will adjust for varying home water pressures and will apply the exact water needed.

Different Types of Grasses

Understanding different types of grasses and where they're primarily found are important because they vary in characteristic and watering requirements. Warm-season grasses, on average, require more water than cool-season grasses. This is due to the impact of summer weather conditions. In general, conditions like high heat, drought, low humidity, and high winds found in southern states cause the moisture in the soil to evaporate more rapidly. Thus, to keep your grass thriving in these locations, you need to adjust your watering schedule. Varieties of grasses include:

Warm-Season Grasses. These include but are not limited to St. Augustine, Bahia, and Bermuda grasses. These types of grasses are found in southern states closer to Texas, Mississippi, and the Gulf of Mexico.

Cool-Season Grasses. Rye, Kentucky Bluegrass, and Tall Fescue are the most popular cool-season grasses to be aware of. They are found closer to northern states such as Michigan and Ohio.

Use our [Plant Hardiness Zone Calculator](#) to determine climate trends in your region.

What If I Am Starting From Seed?



Growing a patch of grass from seed requires a different strategy. During the germination phase, when seeds begin sprouting and developing roots, the soil must remain moist at all times. Grass seeds require these moist environments to begin the process of growth. Otherwise, grass seeds that dry out will eventually die.

Grass Seed Preparation. Water the entire area around 6-8 inches deep each day for a few days before sowing your fresh grass seed. After you've sown the seed, moisten the top two inches of soil for 5-10 minutes. The sown area must remain wet so that the grass seed does not dry out.

How Often Do I Water Grass Seed? Watering new grass seed is best done in the mornings before 10:00 AM. If meeting this requirement is too challenging for your schedule, you may water in the evening when it's not hot. This lowers evaporation and enables more water to be absorbed by the soil.

Water timers may also help solve the problem. Melnor's complete line of [Smart Watering Timers](#) lets you schedule and make adjustments one time, so there's no stress over sticking to your watering routine. They also come available in one, two, or four-zone units that will enable you to complete multiple watering tasks at once.

How Much Do I Water Grass Seed? The amount of water your new grass requires is determined by how much water is dispersed by your sprinklers, the absorption qualities of your soil, and the weather. Ten minutes in the morning and ten minutes in the evening should be plenty to keep the top two inches of soil moist. Water the seedlings longer and less frequently as they grow to encourage the roots to penetrate deeper into the soil.

To determine your sprinkler's water flow rate, refer to the section titled, "How to Tell If I've Watered Enough."

How Long Does Grass Seed Take to Grow? The time it takes for grass seeds to germinate might range from 5 to 30 days. Because the seeds will not sprout all at the same time, the soil must remain wet throughout this period until all the seeds have germinated.



Things to Avoid When Growing Grass

Evaporation. When growing new grass, especially from seed, do your best to eliminate evaporation. You can do this by covering your new grass seed with straw or mulch.

Overwatering. Most well-prepared, new lawns will have been tilled to loosen the soil. Thus, this loose soil is prone to retaining lots of water. Soil that is saturated becomes spongy and will result in compaction when walked on. In addition, higher moisture levels after seeds germinate can also cause disease.

Underwatering. As previously stated, a lack of irrigation will cause your fresh seedlings to wither or grass blades to curl. As a result, you should create a lawn watering routine if you want the best chances of success.

Conclusion

A lush, green lawn adds aesthetic beauty to any house. It's also something to be proud of when walking into your home to eat the chicken parm dinner you've thought about all day.

The secret to growing a beautiful lawn is a consistent watering routine, which can be made simple and efficient using [Melnor's watering tools](#). It is important to water your lawn deeply and infrequently to create a lawn that will endure even in the hottest, driest phases of summer.

Thank you for reading. If you're planning to revive your yellow grass or start from scratch with new grass seed, we hope this guide will assist you along the way. Share photos of your journey using the hashtag, #MelnorLawnWateringGuide, so we can follow along too!

Sources

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