



★ LAWN CARE GUIDE

WATERING YOUR NEW GRASS SEED

WRITTEN BY ALAN CLARK, OWNER ★ 5 MIN READ ★ UPDATED JULY 2026

If you do only one thing well after we seed your lawn, make it this. New grass seed lives or dies on water. Too little and it never sprouts; too much and it rots or washes away. The target is simple — keep the soil consistently damp, like a wrung-out sponge, until the grass is established. Here's exactly how to hit that mark without overthinking it.

THE 30-SECOND VERSION



For the first 2–3 weeks, water **lightly once or twice a day** to keep the top inch of soil damp at all times — never bone-dry, never a swamp. Morning is best. Once the grass is up and rooting, water **less often but deeper** to pull roots down. By week five or six you're at the normal **one inch of water per week**. That's it.

YOUR WATERING SCHEDULE

The amount of water your new lawn needs changes as it grows. Follow this and you'll rarely go wrong.

WEEK 1–2

SPROUTING

Water **lightly 1-2 times a day** — just enough to keep the top inch damp. Short and frequent is the rule. In hot or windy weather you may need a third quick pass midday. The seed can't dry out during this window, even once.

WEEK 3–4

ROOTING

The grass is up and building roots. Start **watering deeper but less often** — maybe once a day, then every other day. Letting the surface dry slightly between waterings teaches roots to reach down for moisture, which builds a tougher lawn.

WEEK 5–6

ESTABLISHING

Shift toward **a few deep waterings a week** instead of daily. The lawn should look full now. This is the transition to a normal, low-maintenance watering routine.

LONG TERM

MATURE LAWN

A healthy established lawn wants about **one inch of water per week**, rain included, delivered in one or two deep sessions. Deep and infrequent beats shallow and daily every time — it's the secret to a lawn that shrugs off a dry August.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU'RE WATERING RIGHT

You don't need fancy tools. A few simple checks tell you everything.

1

THE FINGER TEST

Push a finger into the soil. The top inch should feel damp and cool. If it's dry, water. If it's muddy or your finger comes out with soil stuck to it like paste, you've overdone it — wait.

2

THE ONE-INCH TRICK

To learn what an inch of water actually looks like, set an empty tuna can or two on the lawn while a sprinkler runs. When there's an inch in the can, that's your weekly target for an established lawn. You'll quickly learn how long your setup takes.

3

WATER IN THE MORNING

Early watering soaks in before the sun burns it off and lets the blades dry during the day. Avoid evening watering on established grass — a lawn that sits wet overnight is an invitation for disease.

4

WATCH YOUR SLOPES

On hills and grades, water runs off before it soaks in. Water sloped areas in two shorter passes — let the first soak in, then come back — so the seed on the slope gets its share instead of ending up at the bottom.

COMMON MISTAKES

Almost every watering problem I see is one of these five.

- ✕ **One big soak instead of frequent light passes.** Early on, a single heavy watering runs off and leaves the surface dry hours later. Short and often keeps the seed bed damp.
- ✕ **Letting it dry out for "just an afternoon."** One hot, dry afternoon can kill seed that was about to sprout. This is the most common way a new lawn fails.
- ✕ **Making a swamp.** Standing water, mud, and runoff drown seed and float it into clumps and low spots. Damp, not soaked.
- ✕ **Watering at night.** Once grass is up, overnight moisture invites fungus and disease. Morning is almost always better.
- ✕ **Never adjusting the schedule.** The same daily watering that's perfect in week one will drown the lawn in week five. Ease off as the roots establish.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW MANY TIMES A DAY SHOULD I WATER NEW SEED?

In the first two weeks, once or twice a day is usually right — enough to keep the top inch damp. Hot, dry, or windy days may call for a third short pass. Cool, cloudy days may need only one. Let the soil tell you.

DO I NEED TO WATER IF IT RAINED?

If steady rain kept the soil damp, skip it. Check the top inch — if it's still moist, you're covered. The goal is consistent moisture no matter where it comes from.

HOW LONG SHOULD I RUN MY SPRINKLER?

It depends on your water pressure and sprinkler, so use the tuna-can trick to calibrate. Early on you want short passes that dampen the surface. Later you want longer sessions that soak a few inches deep. Most homeowners land somewhere around 15–30 minutes per zone for deep watering.

CAN I OVERWATER NEW GRASS?

Absolutely. Puddles, runoff, a spongy muddy surface, or seed washed into clumps all mean too much. Overwatering also encourages disease. When in doubt, damp beats soaked.

WHEN CAN I STOP BABYING IT?

Once the lawn is established — usually after five or six weeks and a few mows — you can settle into a normal routine of about an inch a week in one or two deep sessions. If you're unsure whether yours is ready, send me a photo.



"If you're going to be away for a few hot days, tell me before you leave — not after."

The fastest way to lose a new lawn is a stretch of hot weather with nobody watering. It happens every summer: folks head out for a long weekend right after seeding, come home to crispy patches, and think the seed was bad. It usually wasn't — it just got thirsty.

A cheap hose timer from the hardware store solves this for about twenty bucks and runs the sprinkler while you're gone. If you're not sure how to set one up for your yard, ask me — I'll walk you through it. I'd much rather spend five minutes on the phone than watch a lawn we worked hard on dry out over a weekend.

— Alan

NOT SURE ABOUT SOMETHING?

We'd rather answer your question than have you guess. Call, text a photo, or drop us a note — no pressure, no sales pitch.

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