

WATER-WISE CHECKLIST FOR TEXAS HOME LAWNS

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MOWING

TASK

EXPLANATION

RESOURCES & COMMENTS

Mow at the upper end of the appropriate mowing height range for your species of turfgrass.

Taller Grass = Deeper Roots.
Deeper roots can improve overall water infiltration and access to water deeper in the soil.

Follow the 1/3 Rule. Mow frequently enough to avoid removing more than 1/3 of the total turfgrass mowing height at one time.

Scalped grass is stressed grass.
Stressed grass will be less tolerant to heat and drought, and more vulnerable to other pests or fungal pathogens.

For more information on appropriate mowing practices, check out the AggieTurf Website's publications on turfgrass management:
<https://aggieturf.tamu.edu/publications/>

IRRIGATION

TASK

EXPLANATION

RESOURCES & COMMENTS

Water **deeply and infrequently**. Try to water to a depth of approximately 6" each time you water.

Watering this way encourages deeper, denser root growth. Again, this can improve infiltration and access to water deeper in the soil.

Turfgrass can typically be maintained by irrigating **1-2x per week** to provide between **1" and 1.5"** of total water during summer months. Be sure to adjust based on natural precipitation.

Wait to water when **visual wilt** is occurring, and do so late at night or early in the morning.

Watering late at night or early in the morning will reduce evaporative losses, improve water-use efficiency, and reduce length of overall leaf wetness, which reduces disease potential.

Use the **Cycle Soak Method**.

Because sprinkler precipitation rates usually exceed soil infiltration rates, cycle soaking improves soil water infiltration and reduces runoff by "pulsing" water onto the lawn in small amounts over several hours.

Check out this video from Dr. Richard White on the Cycle Soak Method.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vmr9YbHTjL0&t=27s>.

Monitor your irrigation equipment **carefully**.

Broken or malfunctioning irrigation equipment can both waste water and create localized dry spots across the lawn. Replace broken heads, and consider a professional irrigation audit by a licensed irrigator.

Want to check your irrigation efficiency on your own? Check out AgriLife Water University's video on the Catch Can Method.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nlwZ_imn9w&t=2s

IRRIGATION (CONTINUED)

TASK

EXPLANATION

RESOURCES & COMMENTS



Take advantage of rainwater.

Rainwater catchment can help you take advantage of natural precipitation and supplement irrigation water.

A number of AgriLife programs offer courses on rainwater catchment. Check out these programs, or contact your County Extension Agent for local resources:

When natural precipitation is abundant, be sure to adjust automatic sprinkler systems to **shut off** both during and following significant rainfall events.

Healthy Lawns, Healthy Waters
<https://hlhw.tamu.edu/>

Water University
<https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/>

AgriLife Extension's Rainwater Harvesting Page
<https://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu/>

CULTIVATION

TASK

EXPLANATION

RESOURCES & COMMENTS



Prior to planting new turfgrass, focus on good site preparation.

Strive to prepare an 8 to 12" root zone prior to planting new turfgrass. This may include soil cultivation (tillage), incorporation of soil amendments and pre-plant nutrients. In some cases, the addition of top soil material may be beneficial when root zones are shallow.

Turfgrass Establishment for Texas:
<http://gillespie.agrilife.org/files/2013/02/Turfgrass-Establishment-for-Texas.pdf>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Soil, Water, and Forage Testing laboratory:
<http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>

A soil test can be helpful here.



Cultivate to improve soil conditions and reduce thatch build-up as needed.

In the spring and early summer months when turfgrass is actively growing, consider core aeration and/or thatch removal to improve overall water infiltration. Be mindful of in-ground irrigation equipment and consult an expert prior to performing these tasks to confirm they are appropriate for your circumstances.

Contact your local County Extension Agent for additional input. Some professional landscape companies will offer cultivation (aeration, dethatching) as additional services for a fee.

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