

CARE FOR YOUR WINTER LAWN



By late November, Ryegrass should be well-established, thick and a lush green. In order to keep it that way throughout the winter season, there are two main soil conditions to monitor: moisture and nutrients.

Monitoring the moisture level in your soil should be done on a regular basis using a soil probe. If you do not have a soil probe, a screwdriver makes a good substitute. Simply insert the screwdriver into the ground and note how deep you are able to push it in with moderate pressure.

“Care for your winter lawn from November to April.”

The depth to which you can easily insert the screwdriver indicates how far down in the root zone moisture is reaching. An ideal depth is six inches. Based on the depth of moisture in your soil, you can determine what your watering schedule should be. Watering two to three times a week in the early morning for short intervals tends to be most effective in the late fall and winter seasons. Probe your soil regularly, every two to three weeks, to ensure your watering schedule is effective and make adjustments as necessary. Following a winter rain, your irrigation can be turned off, depending on daytime temperatures, and can remain off for days at a time.

Ryegrass requires regular fertilization. During the winter months, apply a fertilizer, such as ammonium nitrate which is formulated for colder temperatures, to your lawn approximately every four to six weeks. Without proper nutrition, the Ryegrass will show signs of stress such as yellowing. It is important to fertilize before yellowing occurs since fertilizer takes longer to take effect in the cooler weather. For further information on fertilizers for the cooler months of year, please consult with a local nursery.

A Note of Caution:

Ryegrass is very sensitive to frost damage. During the winter, there is often frost on your lawn into mid-morning. Be sure not to walk on it since that can cause permanent damage to Ryegrass. Once Ryegrass is damaged, it will not grow back like Bermuda grass will.



Resources



www.wateruseitwisely.com

Visit this website for tips on how to conserve water in your home and in your yard.



www.azarizona.edu/maricopa/garden

Go to the Cooperative Extension website for shrub and tree care in the AZ desert.