

Squeeze every drop

The City of Oklahoma City has partnered with Oklahoma State University's Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture and Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service to help promote outdoor water conservation.

For more information about how you can save water outdoors check out these websites:
squeezeeverydrop.com
thinkwater.okstate.edu
sip.mesonet.org



The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY
UTILITIES DEPARTMENT



Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences
and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

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Turfgrass Management in Oklahoma



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Turfgrass serves a vital role in the landscape. It reduces wind and water erosion, provides a place for outdoor recreation and increases the value of residential property. Maintaining a healthy turfgrass yard requires planning and proper upkeep.

Turfgrass Selection

Start by selecting a grass well adapted to Oklahoma's variable temperature and moisture, site conditions, and your personal need. The table below provides sun requirements, heat tolerance and irrigation requirements of particular turfgrasses.



Turfgrass	State	Sun Requirements	Drought Resistance	Heat Tolerance	Irrigation Requirements
Warm-Season Turfgrass					
Bermudagrass	Statewide (May be susceptible to winter kill in Northern areas)	Full sun	Excellent	Excellent	Low
Buffalograss	Central and Western	Full sun	Excellent	Excellent	Low
St. Augustinegrass	Southern along the Red River	Full sun to shade	Good	Excellent	Medium
Zoysiagrass	Central and Eastern	Full sun to light shade	Very Good	Excellent	Medium
Cool-Season Turfgrass					
Kentucky Bluegrass	Northern and Eastern	Full Sun to Shade*	Good	Fair	High
Perennial Ryegrass	Northern and Eastern	Full Sun to Shade*	Poor	Fair	High
Tall Fescue	Statewide	Full Sun to Shade*	Good	Good	High

*Recommended for lightly shaded areas in Oklahoma, requires more maintenance and irrigation in full sun.

Irrigate Efficiently

Avoid watering frequently and lightly which causes shallow rooting, thatch accumulation and weed germination. Turf should be watered when needed and not on a regular schedule. The amount of water your turfgrass needs is influenced by soil texture and changes in weather.

Only water turfgrass when it shows the first signs of wilt (leaves will begin to roll or fold and turn blue or gray). Most turfgrasses in Oklahoma can survive with no watering in the spring or fall, except in extended drought periods. During the summer months, enough water should be applied to wet the soil to a 6-inch depth (approximately 1 to 2 inches per week). If water begins to puddle or runoff, turn the system off and allow water to soak into the soil. Repeat this cycle until the proper amount of water is applied.



Mow Correctly

Setting the mowing height to 2 to 3 inches for warm season grass and 3 to 4 inches for cool-season grass during the summer will help conserve soil moisture. Grass acts as a natural mulch, retaining soil moisture and shading out weeds. Mow as needed to remove no more than 1/3 of the leaf material per mowing to prevent scalping.

Instead of bagging grass clippings, use a mulching lawn mower or spread the clippings around the yard. Bagging grass clippings removes valuable nutrients from the lawn and take up space in the landfill.

Aerate the Lawn

Aerating is the process of taking small plugs out of the ground or forcing tines into the soil to reduce soil compaction. In high traffic areas, soil can become compact which prevents air flow, water infiltration, and nutrient intake. Aeration will benefit turfgrass by increasing the effectiveness of irrigation and fertilization. Different types of aerating machines can be rented or purchased from local stores.

Reduce Thatch

Thatch is dead, un-decomposed roots and stems that is caused when plant tissue production exceeds decomposition. Excessive thatch layers can reduce water, air and nutrient movement into the root-zone of the soil. This can lead to shallow root development.

The thickness of the thatch layer can be determined by observing a 3- to 4- inch plug. If the thatch is thicker than 0.5 inch, the yard would benefit from dethatching. Dethatch warm-season grasses like bermudagrass and zoysiagrass before the grass greens up in the spring. Use a dethatching machine or a power rake to reduce the thatch layer. For small lawns use a thatch rake to reduce thatch layers.

How to prevent thatch

Only fertilize as needed. Apply 2 to 3 lbs of N per 1,000 sq. ft. for cool-season and 3 to 4 lbs of N per 1,000 sq. ft. for warm-season depending on use and site conditions. For all turf types, apply P and K according to soil test results. Water deeply but infrequently to encourage deep root growth