



The following are general "Rules of Thumb" after your grass is established.

## **MOWING**

1. All **Zoysia, Seashore Paspalum, and Hybrid Bermuda** are best to be mowed low with a reel ("front-throw") mower.

Mow 5/8 - 3/4 inch from the ground. Use a ruler to measure the distance from the soil surface to where you should be mowing. You've probably been mowing a lot higher than this. It's better to mow lower, since mowing too high will lead to a loose, spongy lawn that is hard to walk on and gets mushy when wet. Especially dense-growing zoysia grasses - will promote a tight mat of turf that smothers weeds.

2. **Common Bermuda, Centipede grass, and 'El Toro' Zoysia** can all be mowed with a rotary mower (the inexpensive kind, with a single helicopter-like blade) at a height of 1 - 1.5 inches. Also use a rotary mower to mow **St. Augustine** grass at a height of 2 - 2.5 inches.

Keep your mower sharp. There's a big difference in the quality of cut if the mower is sharp. Dull mowers shred the leaf blades and cause a rippling effect.

Mow often enough to not scalp the grass. This is once a week in the summer when the grass is growing fast and less often - every 10 days in the winter.

## **WATERING**

Don't water too frequently. Keeping the surface constantly wet will suffocate the roots (which need to breathe air), encourage weed growth, and may even promote formation of a slimy layer of algae on the surface which prevents water from penetrating through to the soil.

If the grass doesn't look dry, it doesn't need water. Wait until you see one or two patches of grayish-green appear in the lawn upon close inspection, you will see that the leaves of the drying grass have rolled up and become thin and needle-like. The grass is telling you it needs water. You can either water the whole lawn deeply (30-40 minutes, with perhaps a break to let the water soak in) at this point or be really stingy and soak just the drying spots with a hose and wait for a more generalized drying out before watering the whole lawn.

If you get nervous and itchy to water while waiting for dry spots to appear (it might take longer than you think), you can confirm that the grass is getting enough water by using a garden trowel to dig out a plug of soil. Carefully look at the soil a couple of inches below the surface. If it seems moist, the grass doesn't need water - the roots are picking it up from the moist soil.

Make a mental note of how long it takes between watering to start drying out (longer in shady spots), and you will be able to set your sprinkler system accordingly. It is probably longer than you would imagine. Remember to turn off your system after rain. It may be several days or more before the lawn needs water again. And cut down on the watering frequency in the winter.

## ***FERTILIZING***

To maintain a nice appearance lawn - particularly zoysia - only need about 6 pounds of lawn-type fertilizer per 1,000 square feet of area every three months or so in the summer, and less frequently in the winter.

Be satisfied with a slightly lighter natural shade of green and keep your lawn in slow growth mode. If you pour on the fertilizer to make the lawn a darker green and "healthy", the result will be a fast-growing turf that requires more mowing, gets thick and lumpy, and has more weeds.

## ***HERBICIDE***

Every mature weed can have hundreds of seeds, which if let go can result in a very weedy lawn. Before mowing, go around the lawn with a garden sickle and a small bucket and remove any maturing weeds. That way your lawn will stay weed-free.