

Does Your Lawn Need Water?

Recently, I've seen people watering their lawns. Not just irrigating but letting the water run into the gutter. It has been a dry winter so far. There is more you can do than pray for rain. You can save the water we already have through conservation.

Adjust your sprinklers (or turn them off) for the changing weather. Let the rain, dew and fog do the work! Don't pay for what you don't need.

So, the question is "Does your lawn need water"?

The water from fog and dew are watering opportunities for the grass. Bermuda grass is dormant and will not green up with water. In other words, Bermuda grass does not need water in the winter! The other grasses have slowed their growth for the winter. Remember the more you irrigate the more you mow the lawn.

At this time of the year, your lawn needs very little irrigation. Technically speaking, the evapotranspiration is very, very low. That means that the plant is using and losing very little water. Why is the plant losing and using very little water, you ask? In the winter, the day length is short and the temperature is low.

So, how do you determine if your lawn needs water?

1. An easy method is to walk across your lawn, turn around and look for your footprints. If you see your footprints, then you need to irrigate (not footprints in the dew). If you do not see your footprints, then you *do not* need to irrigate.
2. Another method is to take a shovel or trowel and insert it into the ground 2-3 inches. In most cases if it inserts easily the soil is moist. If you want, take a look at the soil. Is it moist?
3. You can use a general month to month lawn watering guide for the Sacramento Valley. It has been developed by the University using years of Et data.
4. If you are a science geek and love math, you can calculate the Et for your lawn.

If your lawn needs water, please irrigate it properly for the season. And remember, water on the sidewalk and in the gutter is not watering your lawn. The flower beds may need water but that is another story.