

# How often should I water my lawn?

## What type of soil do you have?

"I water my lawn every day. Is that too often?" This is a question often asked by Conservation Gardens visitors.

The answer is "yes" if your lawn grows in a heavy clay soil. If your soil is very sandy, that frequency may be OK. Lawns grown on the heavy clay soils of the Front Range can thrive for many days without requiring irrigation, if soil preparation was adequate.

**Good soil preparation** includes tillage to at least 6 inches and an addition of high quality composted organic matter at rates of 3 cubic yards per thousand square feet of lawn. That's about an inch of compost on the soil surface before it's tilled in.



## What kind of grass are you irrigating?

Choice of grass can also play a big role in extending the time between irrigation. At Northern Water, a plot of drought-hardy Kentucky bluegrass was irrigated only every eight or nine days in 2013, with no rainfall.

Another bluegrass plot had an irrigation interval of 13 days in the summer with no rainfall.

## Extending your irrigation intervals can make a difference

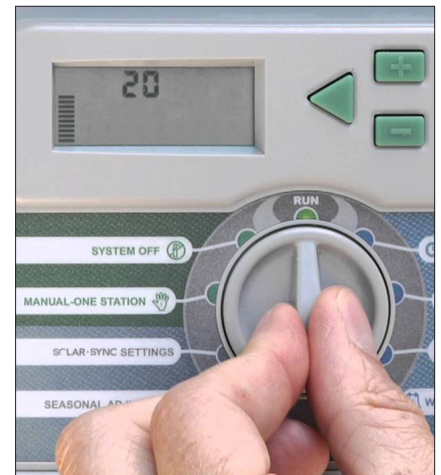
First, extending your irrigation intervals allows rainfall more opportunity to water the lawn instead of developed water sources, decreasing pressure on water supplies.

Second, lawns are healthier if allowed to dry down between irrigations. Over-watering causes more problems for turf than under-watering.

Third, watering less frequently but to greater depths will help develop a deeper root system. That means a bigger soil-water supply for the lawn to tap into.

Fourth, watering less frequently helps conserve our limited water supplies and may also reduce your water bill.

Transitioning to longer irrigation intervals requires patience and persistence. Core aerate the lawn heavily twice a year. If desired, brush high quality composted organic matter into the core aeration holes. Start lengthening the irrigation intervals, letting the lawn be your guide. Wait until it slightly turns to a blueish color, then irrigate.



## Cycle-and-soak can also go a long way

Use cycle-and-soak on clay soils. Cycle-and-soak is an irrigation controller feature that puts on a small amount of the desired total irrigation, then pauses irrigation to allow the irrigation to soak in.

This promotes deeper vertical movement of the irrigation and deeper root growth.

