



B.S. ENTOMOLOGY, M.A.G. - CROP SCIENCE

Easy and organic ways to help conserve water and control weeds:

- **Do not mow bermuda less than 2.5 inches except in early spring when scalping is ok.**
- **Do not mow fescue less than 3.5 inches except in early spring when 2.0 inches is ok.**
- **Turf mowed at 1 inch will need dramatically more water as roots die due to the lack of leaf area.**
- **Reducing mowing height from 2.5 inches to 1 inch can easily increase spurge (milkweed) by 100 %.**
- **"String weed eaters" that remove the turf along the edges will dramatically increase weeds. Ask your lawn man to maintain a thick thatch even on the edges and small areas.**
- **By mowing high, the lawn is stimulated to root deeper allowing for greater drought tolerance and prevention of weeds.**
- **If you are going to allow your lawn to receive only marginal water (1.5 inches per week is marginal after July) you may need to tell your lawn man that your lawn will be so dry after July that the lawn may need mowing only 1 time every 2 weeks. I often see lawns mowed shorter during the summer due to lack of weekly growth, thus increasing weed potential.**
- **Never remove more than 30% of the grass height at one time.**

The drier the lawn, the taller the grass should be cut. Even with weed control chemicals and high mowing, weeds will be worse because your neighbors are generating more weed seed for you to fight. The thatch or turf thickness is like your skin. If the lawn is mowed too short you are removing the protective skin of your lawn. Taller grass has deeper roots which explore the soil for nutrients and water; tall grasses stop weed germination, especially spurge.

I have noticed that as homeowners try to follow water conservation efforts, the lawns do not grow as fast. The lawn mower is then usually lowered and the lawn gets shorter each week. **Lowering the mower is the worst thing you can do.** The opposite should be happening. As the water is restricted, the mower should be raised and lawns mowed less frequently. This may result in less mowing, instead of once per week you may need to need to mow only once per 2 weeks. Homeowners that want to try and maintain a lawn with no irrigation will need to stop mowing- to allow at least 6 inches of turf to develop before it turns brown in July.

**Even with adequate water Fescue may need mowing only once per 2 weeks from July thru September due the lack of sunlight, maintain at least 3.5-4.5 inches of grass height in deep shade.**

**The decision on how much you are going to water needs to be made during the winter before weekly summer contracts are made.**

**The lawn will look the best with weekly mowing but do not lower the mower.**

If you insist on trying to get a "putting green look" you will need to water like a golf course disregarding the cost of water.