

WATER CONSERVATION



District of Mackenzie

1 Mackenzie Boulevard, Bag 340, Mackenzie, BC V0J 2C0

250-997-3221

The District of Mackenzie strives to reduce overall water use in order to put less demand on the existing water distribution system. Lawn watering accounts for about 2/3 or all water used in the District during summer months.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Most people could cut their summer water consumption as much as 50% in the summer just by following a few common sense tips, and lawns wouldn't be any less green because of it.

Here are a few simple tips on lawn care and maintenance that should help you reduce your water use.



Let's Talk Turf



Here are some lawn care tips:

LET IT GROW

Let your grass grow to a height of 2 ½". Taller grass shades new growth and reduces evaporation.

WHEN TO WATER

Mackenzie has water restrictions between May 15 & September 1. (See other side for more details) Water between 4:00 pm and 10:00 am to avoid watering in the hot sun. (Bylaw No.1976 as amended)

ASLEEP AT THE HOSE?

Have you ever fallen asleep and left your sprinklers running all night? Get a sprinkler with a built-in timer and it will shut off automatically at the desired time.

TOP DRESSING

Top dress your soil with organic matter such as compost. This will help your lawn retain moisture and nutrients.

GRASS CLIPPINGS

Leave them on your lawn. Grass clippings provide your lawn with vital nitrogen and moisture.

FERTILIZERS

High nitrogen fertilizers stimulate temporary growth that looks great, but requires excessive irrigation. Look for a more balanced mix like 16-10-8.

AERATE YOUR LAWN

Lawns can become compacted over time. Aerating removes cores of soil and turf from your lawn, allowing water, oxygen and nutrients to penetrate the soil.

THATCH

Thatch is a thin layer of decomposing grass on the soil. A small amount of thatch is good because it provides insulation from heat and evaporation. Too much thatch reduces water penetration. Watering moderately helps prevent thatch buildup.

MULCH

Mulch acts as a protective cover around plants. It keeps your soil cool and moist and discourages weed growth. Organic mulches such as pine bark, shredded cedar, or wood chips are ideal. Avoid rocks as they retain heat, increasing the need to water.

SHARPEN YOUR BLADE

Keep the blades on your mower sharp; dull blades tear the grass leaving it open to disease and heat stress.

OVERSEEDING

You can introduce a mix of drought tolerate fescue grasses to your existing lawn, which will help cut down the watering. Overseeding should be done at the same time as fertilizing, top dressing or aerating.

WATER CONSERVATION ON THE LAWN



"In summer months, lawn watering can double or even quadruple your water use."

There is no real schedule for how often a lawn should be watered – it depends on the lawn in question. The simplest way to check if your lawn needs water is to step on it. If the grass springs back, there's no need to water. If it stays flat, fetch the sprinklers. Or cut a slice in your lawn with a spade to see if the soil below the surface is moist.

WATER RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT FROM

MAY 15 TO SEPT 1

Even days – Even numbered houses

Odd days – Odd numbered houses

No watering from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

As a rule of thumb, you should water your lawn to a depth of ½ inch. Since most hoses and sprinklers deliver water at different rates, here's how to calculate how long to run your sprinklers to get ½ inch of water:

1. Put a pie plate or an empty tuna tin on your lawn near your sprinklers.
2. Turn on your sprinklers and time how long it takes to fill the plate or tin to ½ inch.

AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

AUTOMATIC irrigation systems come on whether your lawn needs water or not. Pay attention to your system to avoid over watering.

LEARN how to use your timer.

ADJUST your timer for the seasons. You don't need to water as often in spring and fall as you do in summer.

IF IT rains, or the weather is cool, turn off your system for a few days.

CHECK your sprinklers from time to time to ensure the water is not landing on roads or sidewalks. Also, check to see if any bushes or trees have grown that may block the spray.

ENSURE that water coming from your sprinklers is a spray, not a

fine mist. When sprinklers mist, almost half the water is lost to evaporation. Water should land on your lawn in drops.

OVERWATERED? If you water too much, your grass will develop shallow roots, leaving your lawn less resistant to pests, drought, and winter kill. Water less frequently and your grass will develop deep, healthy roots.

Anyone wishing to take a tour of the town water facilities may call the Public Works Department at 250-997-3761 to make arrangements.

YOUR WATER SOURCE

Water comes from three 60 foot wells located beside Morfee Lake and is piped to a 500,000 gallon reservoir. The Gantahaz subdivision has its own 100,000 gallon reservoir.

About 650,000 gallons flow through these reservoirs on an average day. On peak days, up to 1,700,000 gallons can flow through the reservoirs.

When demand for water is high, the wells do not fill up fast enough to keep up. That's why water conservation in summer is important.