



Lawn Watering Guide

Many factors contribute to how often and long you need to water. Use the chart below as a starting place for watering typical lawns.

- **Spring and fall** – cool nights and days with short day length reduces water needs of plants.
- **Frequency** – should be infrequent, but you may need to lengthen the amount of time

Month	Number of Days to Water Per Week	Pop-Up Spray Head	Rotor Head
May	1-2	2 cycles of 6 minutes	2 cycles of 16 minutes
June	2-3	2 cycles of 8 minutes	2 cycles of 18 minutes
July	2-3	2 cycles of 9 minutes	2 cycles of 20
August	2-3	2 cycles of 8 minutes	2 cycles of 18 minutes
September	1-2	2 cycles of 7 minutes	2 cycles of 16 minutes
October	1	2 cycles of 6 minutes	2 cycles of 16 minutes

- per irrigation cycle based on soil, plant, time, and sun exposure.
- **Clay soil** – you may need to ‘cycle and soak’ so you are not applying more water at a time than your soil can absorb. On watering days, divide watering into two cycles. Run the cycle once, and then run it again. If you have an irrigation controller, add a second start time to achieve this.
- **Soil moisture** – Use a screwdriver, soil probe, or moisture meter to check soil moisture. **Check deeper** (3-6 inches) for lawn moisture. Never go by the top 1-2 inches of soil.
- **Water for specific plants** – Lawn 6-8 inch depth, Trees at least 12 inches, and know how wide and where the root zone is located. (Tree roots can be located at a distance 2-5 times their height).
- **Water when it is dark** (or between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.) to reduce evaporation and fungal diseases and **don’t water when it is windy** to reduce water loss.
- **Practice good lawn care** – Core aerate annually, mow 2.5-3 in., fertilize properly. Find out more at **Lawn Care Basics** <https://col.st/ybk8z>
- **Having lawn issues?** Check your sprinklers with an irrigation audit <https://col.st/spugo>
- If installing a new landscape or retrofitting your yard, consider **native plants** and other **low-water plants**. See Plant Select (plantselect.org) for plants that thrive in our environment.

By Susan Carter, CSU Extension (retired); revised by Mollie Freilicher, CSU Extension, 2026.
Questions? Contact your local CSU Extension Tri-River Area Office: Mesa: 970-244-1834 or Master Gardener Desk 244-1836; Delta: 970-874-2195; Montrose & Ouray: 970-249-3935.