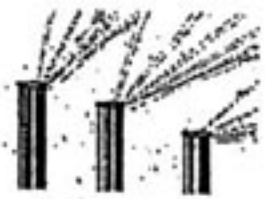


## LEARNING TO WATER EFFICIENTLY



Homeowners should maintain a deep, infrequent irrigation schedule. This method is best for the overall health of the lawn because it reduces disease, helps insure good air movement down to the root system, and conserves water.

### The Goal:

Apply enough water to adequately wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches.

The following steps can be used to determine how long you need to run your irrigation system.

- Set out five to six tuna or cat food cans randomly on the lawn.
- Turn the sprinkler head or system on for thirty minutes.
- Measure and record the depth of water caught in each individual can.
- Calculate the average depth of water from all of the cans.

**Example:** You used five cans in your yard. The depth of water collected in the cans was as follows: 0.5" (1/2"), 0.4", 0.6", 0.4", 0.6". Add the depths together and then divide by the number of cans you used (5 in this case).  $0.5" + 0.4" + 0.6" + 0.4" + 0.6" = 2.5" / 5 \text{ cans} = 0.5"$  of water in 30 minutes.

- Use a garden spade or a soil probe to determine how deep the soil was wet during the 30 minute time period. Push the probe into the soil. It will push through the wet soil easily, but will become difficult when it reaches dry soil. Measure the depth of wet soil.
- Knowing how much water was applied in the 30 minute cycle and how deep that volume of water wet the soil, makes it easy to determine how long the sprinkler head must run to adequately wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches.

**Example:** The system put out 1/2 inch of water in 30 minutes wetting the soil to a depth of 3 inches. Therefore, 1 inch of water will need to be applied to wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches giving a run time of 1 hour.

3" wet soil = 1/2" of water = 30 minutes

6" wet soil = 1" of water = 1 hour

After you have adequately wet the soil, do not irrigate until the grass needs it. Drought stress symptoms will develop when the lawn needs watering.



### Symptoms of Drought Stress:

- Grass leaves turn a dull, bluish color
- Leaf blades roll or fold
- Footprints persist for an extended period of time after walking across the lawn.

Drought symptoms may develop in as little as three days or not for fifteen days. In most situations, symptoms will develop within five to seven days of the last watering.