



## SPECIAL ISSUES FOR THE SUMMER

2014

Periodically we are faced with an unusual phenomenon. The phenomenon is; because temperatures have been unusually cool and damp, people perceive we have had a lot of rain and therefore have not been watering or watering enough. Although we feel it has been cool and damp we rarely factor in two things; 1) Wind sucks the moisture out of the ground very rapidly (a breeze can suck ½” of moisture per day out of the soil so wind is even more damaging), 2) turf needs 2” of moisture per week at least from the time it emerges from dormancy.

- We received less than 4” of moisture in April and May combined without factoring the loss from extensive wind that we have suffered.
- Grass will stay green when it is cool but it is not actually healthy.
- Roots only grow two times a year in spring and again in late fall, the rest of the season they are shrinking up.
- Water is the only thing that promotes root growth and must be applied when the roots are active which begins immediately after the thaw in March/April.
- When roots are encouraged to grow with proper moisture during early spring they will extend well into the soil at least 6-8” so when we start hitting hot dry temps they are living in the cool moist soil and take longer to shrink up into the shallow soil that dries out daily.
- We are well into June and the roots are already beginning to shrink.

All this means that the lawns will be suffering from shallow root growth this year and will be trying to survive in the top few inches of soil that dries out daily. Beginning the week of Memorial Day we had several days of 80’s with a 90 thrown in one day and drought stress began to appear. We expect it to be difficult to maintain that beautiful green lawn without much more water this summer.

If your lawn is looking a little brown try pushing a screwdriver into the soil, if it does not slide in easily then you need more water. We have been on several lawns during this month (June) where it has been very difficult to push a very sharp probe in more than 1” which is not good.

Watering deep once per week during April and May will establish very deep roots meaning you will need less water through most of the summer because the roots take much longer to shrink up into the drier shallow soil (typically late July or early August). If you have any questions please call us.