

How to Get Your Lawn Ready for Spring

As we enter Spring, it is time to get ready to turn our sprinklers back on. **Do not** wait until your lawn completely dries out to start irrigating again! Follow these **3 Easy Steps** to prepare:

Sprinkler Calibration

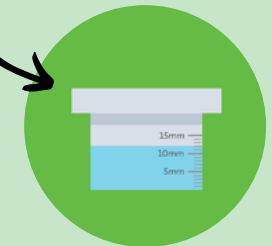
1 Cups

It is important to know **how much water (mm)** you are distributing each time you run your sprinklers. By using **Catch Cups**, or any straight-sided container, you can also check that watering is even.

Start by randomly placing catch cups over your lawn, it should include any problem areas and those that are performing well. *Make sure you have marked mm up the side.*

Then, run your reticulation at your normal settings - make sure that all sprinklers are working and that there are no **obstructions** (i.e., the grass has not grown higher than the sprinklers).

If the sprinklers are well-positioned with the spray overlapping adequately at the correct height, the container water depth should be **reasonably uniform** (a couple of mm difference is normal). If they are largely different, your sprinklers may need to be **repositioned** or **recalibrated**.



2 Calibration

1. *If the Cups are Uneven*

First, start by checking the sprinklers themselves. Take the **sprinkler heads off** and check whether they have a build-up of any **dirt** or **scale**, which can contribute to the sprinklers distributing water unevenly.

Flush out any dirt, or, if **scale** is present, place the sprinkler heads in some **CLR (calcium remover)** for 10 minutes and clean with an old toothbrush to get into the grooves. Rinse with clean water before screwing the heads back on. It is also important to make sure you have all the *same sprinkler heads* over the area. The most common reticulation problems are due to **blocked/misaligned sprinklers** or **incorrect heads for water pressure**, or not using fit for purpose sprinklers.

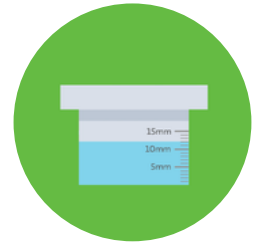
Try the Catch Cup test again, and if you still do not have even coverage, replace the sprinklers with new ones which you can get from your local irrigation store - just remember to take your old ones in with you.



2. If the Cups are Even





Take note of how many mm of water is in each container and *how long* you ran your reticulation to capture it.

Our aim is to work out how long it takes your reticulation to distribute a standard **10mm drink** of water.



All lawns require a **minimum 20mm** of water **per week** for survival, **ideally 40mm** in Summer (with additional hand watering as required in heat waves). However, most lawns can only absorb **10mm of water at a time**. However, during peak **summer heatwaves**, put out **slightly more** than 10mm to allow for the higher **evaporation rate**.

Below is a general guide to help determine how long it might take for your sprinklers to distribute 10mm of water, however, it is important to remember that individual water pressure and efficiency of the system will impact this.

			
Pop-Up / Fixed spray	Rotary	Gear Drive Rotors	Micro Spray
Approx watering rate per hour 35-45mm	Approx watering rate per hour 10-15mm	Approx watering rate per hour 10-20mm	Approx watering rate per hour 35-45mm
Suggested run time to apply 10mm standard drink 13-16 minutes	Suggested run time to apply 10mm standard drink 40-60 minutes	Suggested run time to apply 10mm standard drink 30-40 minutes	Suggested run time to apply 10mm standard drink 13-16 minutes

Split a 10mm application of water over your nominated watering days. The best time to water lawns is early in the morning between **4-9 am**. Watering in the morning, when there is usually less wind and heat, will reduce water lost through evaporation.

It will also allow your lawn to soak up more water in less time. Water will soak through the roots and provide a moisture reserve throughout the day, and keep the lawn cooler during the hottest parts of the day (meaning less stress on your lawn).

If you were **underwatering** your lawn, increase it to the 10mm immediately. If you were **overwatering**, you will need to gradually reduce the amount of water to the 10mm over a couple of weeks - otherwise, the turf will go into stress as it is used to receiving more water. This will encourage the roots to become stronger.

3 Wetting Agent & Fertiliser

Wetting Agents

A good quality **soil wetter** and **moisture retainer** should be applied to your lawn at least 3 times a year: at the beginning of Spring (especially if you aerate your lawn), the beginning of Summer, and again in mid to late Summer and optionally in May to help your lawn retain water from Winter rain.



Soils in WA along the Swan Coastal Plain (Perth and Southwest) are naturally non-wetting sandy soils and have trouble absorbing water. They are notoriously hydrophobic (water repellent) and grains of sand develop silica around them which creates a waxy cover that literally pushes water away.

The only way to remedy this is to apply a good wetting system (**soil wetter and moisture retainer**).

To find out if your soil requires a wetting agent, put a sample of the soil on a dish and make a well in the center. Pour water into the well; if the water is **not easily absorbed**, your soil needs the help of a **wetting agent**.

We recommend applying **Aquaforce Soil Wetter** first according to the label rate followed by **Bi-Agra Moisture Retainer** at the label rate **5 days later** and again at **4-6 week intervals** during the warmer months. These are two very high quality products specifically designed for WA's soils. They are sold at licensed turf farms and some Nutrien Water stores.

Fertiliser

As the ground temperatures are now warming up, your lawn will be needing a balanced feed as it comes out of winter dormancy. Apply a well balanced slow-release **NPK Fertiliser**. NPK stands for **Nitrogen** (promotes leaf development), **Phosphorous** (promotes root growth), and **Potassium** (strengthens, prevents lawn disease and promotes healthy growth).



A slow-release NPK-based Maintenance Fertiliser should be applied at the change of every season (minimum 4 times per year), and if required, a second lighter application can be applied mid-spring and mid-summer (maximum 6 times per year). The granules should be spread over a **dry lawn** and watered in well. This will prevent the fertiliser from burning the turf.



We recommend our Greenacres **Maintenance Fertiliser**, or for Buffalo lawns, our **Palmetto Premium Lawn Fertiliser** - both sold at our Serpentine Farm and Bunbury Farm.