

# 4 Steps to Save water and have a healthier lawn

## #1 Maintain your sprinkler system

- Regularly check that all heads are functioning well—no tipped, buried, or sunken heads.
- Use all the same types of heads on one station for even coverage. Head-to-head spray pattern gives more even coverage.
- Know your precipitation rate and don't over-water.



## #2 Irrigate properly

- Train the roots to go deep in the spring. Water really well once, then wait for your lawn to tell you when it needs water again.
- If only a few dry spots appear, water those with a hose. When the whole lawn tells you it needs water, turn on the system.
- Water the same amount each time you irrigate, then change the days between irrigation as the season changes (1–1.5" a week depending on soil type). Sandy soils require more frequent irrigation with less water applied each time.
- This method encourages roots to dig deep becoming more drought tolerant and healthier.
- Very wet spots may indicate a broken head or water line.

## #3 Fertilize properly

- Apply 3–4 lbs. nitrogen (N) per 1000 square feet throughout the growing season.
- Apply 1 lb. at spring green-up, 1 lb. around Memorial Day, 1 lb. around Labor Day and .5–1 lb. after the last mowing.

## #4 Mow properly

- Sharpen mower blades regularly.
- Mow frequently so that no more than 1/3 of the grass blade is removed at each mowing.
- Mow grass higher—the longer the grass blade, the deeper the root. Deeper-rooted grass is more drought resistant.
- Mulch, rather than bag, lawn clippings. This holds in moisture and reduces fertilizer requirements.
- Thatch build-up decreases water and oxygen in the root zone— aerate when needed.

### Extra Tips:

- Hydro-zoning: Group plants according to water needs.
- Water specially for trees once a month.



**University of Idaho**  
Extension