



Town of Pepperell  
Department of Public Works  
Water Division  
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**Please be advised that on January 1, 2008 the Department of Public Works - Water Division's fee schedule and usage rates were revised. For customers who consume an average amount of water, only a slight increase will be noticed in your water bill. However, for those customers who are high water users, a considerable increase will be reflected in your bill. MassDEP guidelines require that not more than 65 gallons per person per day be used by all residential customers. This quantity is not much if significant outdoor water use is factored in.**

**Also, effective January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008, the Board of Public Works voted to make the voluntary water ban mandatory, with violations subject to a fine. Effective May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> of every year, outdoor watering of any kind is restricted to even numbered days of the month for homes with an even address and odd numbered days for homes with an odd number address.**

**Should conditions require, the Board of Public Works will declare a water emergency in which case all outdoor water use will be banned.**

## From the Conservation Commission:

Making smart choices about caring for your lawn can help the environment--and save money too.

See the tips adapted from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority on the other side of this sheet.

For more information, go to [www.mwra.com](http://www.mwra.com) or [www.mass.gov/agr/waterwellbeing](http://www.mass.gov/agr/waterwellbeing) or call the Pepperell Conservation Commission office at 978-433-0325.

# Tips for Improving Your Lawn, Helping the Environment--and Saving Money Too

## **Water Only When Necessary**

Frequent light watering can actually weaken your lawn by encouraging shallow roots that are less tolerant of dry periods and more susceptible to insect damage. Wet grass can also burn in the hot sun and is vulnerable to disease from mildew and fungus.

Test your soil for dryness by digging your finger below the surface of the soil. Water only when the soil is dry to a depth of 1 1/2 inches. When watering, check to see that water soaks down 3-4 inches. This encourages deep root growth.

Roots can maintain plenty of moisture even after several days without rain. Before watering, look for signs that it's needed: patchy areas, a general change in color, or footprints that remain in the grass long after being made.

- One inch of water a week (rain plus supplemental watering) should be plenty. After heavy rains, you may not need to water for 10-14 days. Water very early in the morning.
- Never water when it's windy, rainy or very hot.
- Raise the blade level of your mower to 2 -3 inches or more. Longer grass retains more moisture because it shades the roots. It encourages deeper rooting, requires less fertilizer and competes better against weeds. Mow frequently so that you are only cutting a little off the top of each blade of grass.
- Never water faster than the soil can absorb it. Avoid puddling and run-off.
- If you have an automatic sprinkler system, make sure the timer or "controller" is set to water each landscape zone efficiently. Program the controller to operate according to the watering needs of your lawn or garden. Better still, install a rain sensor or soil moisture sensor that turns the system off if it's raining or if moisture is present in the soil.
- Aerate your soil in April, September or October to aid water absorption and retention.

If your lawn "fades" in the summer, don't panic. Grass becomes naturally dormant during hot, dry periods. It will revive quickly after a good rainfall or when the weather turns cooler.

## **Be Careful with Fertilizer**

Runoff from lawns that are over-fertilized is a major source of water pollution as well as a waste of money.

- Look for low-nitrogen, slow release, organic fertilizers. They produce the deepest, healthiest root systems.
- Use only the amount of fertilizer recommended on the bag. It will seem like a very small amount.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. That returns nutrients to the soil and reduces the need to fertilize.
- Do not apply fertilizer in the summer - new growth requires more water. Apply in early spring and or fall.

If your lawn is larger than you need, consider converting part of it to meadow or shrubs and trees. Use native plants. You will save time and money in the long run, and you will be preventing pollution and providing wildlife habitat.