

June 29, 2005

Dear Valued Client:

The National Weather Service has issued a Moderate Drought Warning for our entire region. According to the weather service, we are currently running a rainfall deficit in excess of 5" from normal.

What does this mean for us? Aside from having to cope with the current heat wave, we need to focus our attention on the care and maintenance of our new and existing plant material. If we do the necessary things to help our plants through this weather, we will ensure that they will continue to perform as the season and year progresses.

Let's start off with the plant material, big, small, old, new, now is a crucial time for plant material because they are trying to take up necessary nutrients and moisture for the rest of the year. Believe it or not, plant material will only be actively growing for the next month and a half. By mid-August, most plants stop growing and begin storing food for the winter. When you wake up and get out in the morning, walk your property and make a mental note on the condition of your plants. Do they look wilted? Are the leaves curled and cupped? Are plants or trees losing leaves? Are they turning fall colors? These are all signs that those plants are suffering from lack of moisture. The best times to soak your plants are between 5am.-9am. or after 6pm. Do not water during the day! The water will evaporate before it soaks into the ground. The most effective way to water shrubs, ornamentals and trees is with a soaker hose or a ROSS Root Feeder. A soaker hose can be placed around the plants or through the garden and allowed to run for several hours. A ROSS feeder is a probe that attaches to your hose and can be used to water into the ground around the root zone of the plant. Smaller plants such as perennials and flowers can be watered by hand with a watering wand. Whichever method you choose, be diligent and thorough. This does not mean that you have to water every plant, every day. Begin with the plants that are clearly showing stress as described above and then proceed to the others. After your first round of watering, which may take several days to complete, continue to monitor the condition of plants. When plants begin to wilt again, start over again. You will find that some plants will require more water than others. The goal here is to sustain the plant material through this dry period. We are not trying to change Mother Nature. What if it rains? Great! Don't stop monitoring your plants, it will take a tremendous amount of water and periods of long soaking rains to make up for the current lack of moisture. If we do not take these steps now, it is possible that many of these plants may not live. If these steps are not taken for the remaining season, don't be surprised if these plants wind up dead next spring.

Now let's address the condition of our lawns. Grass requires a minimum of 1-1.5" of water per week. This does not mean water every day, every other day or even every two days. It means that in one period of watering, your lawn should receive that amount of water. If you do not water at all, don't worry. Your lawn will turn brown and go dormant until adequate moisture becomes available. If you have an irrigation system, verify its

settings. A general guideline is 45min-1hr. for rotary heads, 20-30min for mist heads. Times should be adjusted for individual zones. (I.e. Shade, sun, size of area, slopes, etc.)

If you use a manual sprinkler, use a graduated container to measure the amount of water being delivered over a period of time until the minimum of 1-1.5" of water has been met.

Again, do not water during the heat of the day, you're just wasting water.

As a result of our extreme temperature changes from spring to summer, we are seeing a huge explosion of various lawn diseases. Many people are looking at their lawn and seeing various shades of brown. Brown does not always mean dry. Many turf diseases will turn your lawn brown as well. A dry lawn will have a uniform, consistent, dull brown cast to it. Compare your entire lawn to that of your neighborhood school field and you will see dry. If your lawn has irregular shaped patchy areas, a gold-yellow cast in areas, splotchy looking areas, your lawn has developed a turf disease. Do not begin watering more! Fungus will grow and spread in hot, humid and constantly moist environments. The best thing to do is allow the lawn to dry out and always be allowed to dry out in between watering. The fungus problems we are seeing are seasonal. There is no need to fear that if it's there now, it will be a problem every year. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of things that can be done to reverse the problem. I can only suggest that you be diligent with proper watering habits. I only water my lawn 1 time per week. Yes, my lawn begins to look dry towards the end of the week. That is what is supposed to happen.

If you are not sure about what proper watering means, please refer back to our watering letter sent out in the spring. If my directions were followed, a copy of this letter should be in your irrigation timer box. You can also refer to the FAQ page at www.shellyslandscape.com. We can also send our letter as an attachment to a reply from an e-mail if you would like.

As always, if you are not sure about something, have a question, need guidance, or just want reassurance that you are doing the right thing, please call us or drop us an e-mail. Your landscaping is a large investment in both money and time. If properly taken care of, it should be there a long time. The lack of moisture is a very real concern and will take active participation on your part to ensure that it will perform as desired. There are no guarantees when it comes to neglect and we have no control over Mother Nature.

Sincerely,

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