

April 18, 2005

Dear Valued Customer:

PLEASE DO NOT THROW OUT THIS LETTER. AFTER READING, PLACE IN YOUR IRRIGATION CLOCK BOX OR NEAR YOUR WATERING PRODUCTS AND KEEP FOR REFERENCE.

Does your lawn have irregular yellow patches that don't appear to be growing? Do your evergreens appear yellow with little or no growth? Do other plants appear to be struggling? These are classic signs of **over watering** and you might not be aware you are doing it.

By now, most of your irrigation systems have been turned on and whether you know it or not, your irrigation contractor has probably set up your timer incorrectly. Usually they set the system to run frequently for short periods of time. If this is the case, and now is the time to check, you need to make some adjustments. By watering frequently, the plants, and your lawn develop shallow root systems that become very susceptible to temperature and moisture fluctuations. As a result, they tend to develop stress conditions very easily. Lawns that receive too much water will generally begin to show signs of fungus and generally will deteriorate as the summer progresses. Plant material will begin to yellow and decline and possibly even die from too much water. If your plants have been established for more than two seasons, they do not need regular irrigation. This year we have seen a lot of plant material that did not survive the winter because without much insulating snow, the shallow root systems froze and killed off the plants. Some of these plants and trees were over 15-20 years old and died without any signs of previous stress. With the very cool, wet spring we are already seeing signs of fungus in lawns that generally don't show up for another month. Take this letter and go out to your clock and set according to the following recommendations:

Your lawn should be watered **ONCE PER WEEK!** The pop-up mist heads should be set to run for **30** minutes. The rotary heads should run for **1** hour. These are per section times. The system should turn on so that the last section is done watering by 8:00 am. This means that you add the number of zones and the times for each zone and work backwards from 8:00am. to calculate the start time. The zones that run in your plant beds should be **TURNED OFF**. (Unless they are newer plants, then consult your plant installer). The only time your plants should be watered is if they appear wilted in the early morning or later in the evening. Most plants will wilt in the heat of the day to conserve energy.

What if I don't have an irrigation system? Well consider yourself somewhat lucky. I do not have one and my lawn always appears green and healthy without any signs of stress. The only time I water is when my lawn starts to wilt. If your lawn appears "gray" or if you walk on it and footprints do not spring back, it needs water.

Set out a sprinkler and let it run until it delivers 2" of water. You can use a graduated coffee can ½ way out from the sprinkler to get an idea of how long that will take. Different sprinklers will apply different rates of water. Last year I only watered my lawn twice, honestly. Think of all the savings! Same thing can be done with a sprinkler system. Don't set it for regular watering; only turn it on when the lawn is dry. This is the best way to avoid over watering. No harm can be done by under watering. If you really want to be kind to your lawn and your plants, let them starve a little bit. Always watering does not mean that your lawn will be the greenest and it may in fact suffer greatly!

This letter should serve as an annual reminder and be kept! These guidelines are strictly guidelines. Every property has its own limiting factors and may need to be adjusted accordingly. Smaller sections may require less water, shady areas will not dry out as fast, sloped areas may require more water due to runoff, etc. If you have any questions, please call. Believe it or not, we are relatively familiar with all your lawns and can answer many questions over the phone. If you are not sure how to set your system, please consult your manual or have your irrigation contractor give you a lesson. This is something that you need to know to ensure you are properly watering your lawn and not becoming a victim of the set-and-forget crowd. In addition, if you ever think you need to water more, **CALL US FIRST! Your lawn may not be dry; it may have developed some disease!**

We at Shelly's Landscaping are here to try and provide good, quality service and also educate our customers at the same time. After all, we are only on your property once per week. You the homeowner have made the investment and whether we are your service company for one year, or many years, we would like you to know that maintaining a landscape is a joint effort between us. By giving you the correct information, we hope to make that effort a beneficial one and we appreciate the confidence that you have put in us to maintain your site. If you ever have any questions regarding watering or anything else, please remember to call us. Also, as a reminder, these and other general tips can be found on our website at WWW.SHELLYSLANDSCAPE.COM on the FAQ page.

Sincerely,

Gary and Shelly Dubofsky