

**IWVWD PRESS RELEASE – July 10, 2009**  
**Tom Mulvihill, GM Column**

**Water Efficient Lawn Care**

The Indian Wells Valley Water District Board has adopted voluntary summer watering guidelines that are in effect between May 1 and October 31. Odd numbered addresses are asked to water only on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and even numbered addresses on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Please keep the watering between 8 pm and 8 am.

You may be wondering if your grass can thrive under this schedule. Area landscapers and the Department of Water Resources assure us that it can. Apparently, most gardeners – amateur and professional – tend to over water. Turning the sprinklers on every day can make grass water dependent, weaken the root system and render it more vulnerable to pests and disease.

Consider these suggestions:

Water only five minutes at a time. In areas of our valley, the soil has a high clay/caliche content which means it can only absorb a limited amount of water. Watering longer will only create run-off and run-off is just another term for wasted water. 2) Don't water if you don't need to. Step on your grass. If the blades spring back, they don't need irrigation. 3) During the hottest months, water your grass three separate times at least one half-hour apart in the cool hours of the morning or evening. This will lessen evaporation and allow adequate time for water to be absorbed between irrigation cycles. In other words, you'll get more bang for the drop! 4) Keep your grass taller than usual during summer – at least 2 ½ inches high. This way, the blades will actually shelter the roots from the sun. 5) Aerate your lawn every six months or so. This will break up the soil and allow more water to seep into the root system. 6) If you must have living turf, consider replacing fescue or Bermuda with Buffalo grass. A native of America's Great Planes region, it is highly drought tolerant; takes the cold well and can be irrigated with a subterranean watering system, practically eliminating evaporation.

The Water District has had a good deal of positive feed back about our summer watering guidelines. We appreciate your support. Our future relies on prudent management of our sole source of fresh water, our aquifer. Coupled with the Governor's mandate for a 20 percent per capita decrease in water usage by the year 2020, you can see why conservation is vital.

To assist you with your conservation efforts, we offer free water audits and drought resistant yard consultations for all residents of the IWV – customers and non-customers alike. Contact us at (760) 384-5518 for more information. Your Indian Wells Valley Water District is here to serve you.