



Lawn & Order of Arizona

Newsletter

June 2009



■ Weather Information:

Dry and windy is the order of the day. June is shaping up to be both and quite typical. Keep sunblock and a wide-brimmed hat available, and make drinking plenty of water a habit!

Monthly averages for the Phoenix Metro Area:

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|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| JUNE | Highs - 101°F | Low - 62°F | Mean - 82°F | Avg. Precip. - .09 in. | Rec. - 114°F | Rec. - 48°F |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|

Homeowner Tip

June is probably the most difficult period for many plants because of the long days, high temperatures, and low humidity. Ineffective water management is the number one cause of death of landscape plants in the Valley, and, believe it or not, it is more frequently from over watering than under watering. You can reduce your water bill and take better care of your plants if you water slowly (prevents run off), deeply (use a soil probe or a long handled screwdriver to check that the water is penetrating 1-2 ft. deep for trees and shrubs, and 1- 1 1/2 ft. deep for turf & flowers), and infrequently (Let the soil dry between watering).

■ Granite Issues:

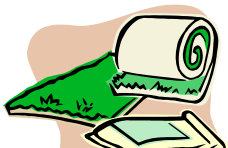
The weeds are now back under control and we should not be seeing any further problems in the near future. Most plants will receive a light shaping trim to maintain a neat appearance without being too formal, the exception being those still in bloom.

■ Trees:

We will continue to remove sucker growth and damaged limbs from the trees. We will begin trimming out center growth in preparation for the Monsoon season.

■ Irrigation:

We are currently irrigating twice per week in granite areas. We will be remaining at this setting until July and perhaps beyond depending on temperatures.



TURF

Transitioning From Rye to Bermuda

As I am sure everyone has noticed, the grass is looking a little stressed right about now but, not to worry this won't last much longer. The transition from Rye grasses to Bermuda grasses occurs every year about the same time and this year is no exception.

Rye grasses do not like high temperatures. Once the temperatures go above 90 degrees, the Rye begins to stress and, in some cases, dies off entirely. This Rye die off is inevitable. There is nothing we can do to stop it. We may delay the process by vastly over-watering the turf, which of course causes high water bills, fungus, mold, sappy areas and a delay in the Bermuda establishment; but I don't think any of these are good choices. More water will only delay the certainty of the Rye die off because Rye grass is a cool season grass and even though you may be watering like crazy, nonetheless, the soil will eventually reach a temperature (85 degrees or above) where the Rye grass roots will die regardless of moisture.

By the way, it's the night time temperatures that result in the highest increases in soil temperatures. When it doesn't cool off at night, there is no way for the soil to dump the accumulated heat of the day so we have to have the Bermuda ready for soaring soil temperatures in the later part of June when night time temperatures climb into the 80's. This is also why in shady areas, where Bermuda will not grow, the Rye dies off a little later, yes, but goes by the way side nonetheless. The ground just gets too hot for Rye roots.

Any delay in the Rye to Bermuda transition means we are far more likely to have establishment issues with the Bermuda. If the Bermuda is not well established PRIOR to the advent of extreme heat, it will struggle all summer and not look the way it should.

So there you have it folks, not a good answer, perhaps, but the truth just the same. Just look around and you will see, you're not the only folks with less than perfect grass this time of year. To help kick start the Bermuda, we fertilized heavily last week and we have increased the length of watering but not the frequencies. In a few weeks things will be greening up just fine and getting ready for summer.

Thank you very much,

**Dave O'Laighin
480-226-3702**