



Website aids in knowing how much to water lawns

BY BILL TEETER,
CONSERVATION SPECIALIST
CITY OF HORSESHOE BAY

As spring approaches and turf and plants emerge from winter dormancy, homeowners' minds are turning to their landscaping and grass. Yet when it comes to watering, many homeowners find themselves scratching their heads about how long to run their sprinkler systems.

The answer depends on many factors, such as temperature, humidity, wind, rainfall, shade, turf type, and sprinkler head types. Constantly changing weather conditions further complicate matters.

Agronomists say an inch per week of precipitation should be sufficient for most landscapes in the height of summer. Importantly, this

weekly inch is composed of water from both sprinklers and rainfall. In other words, a lawn is best managed when rainfall is supplemented with water from sprinklers.

Getting the right answer about how much to water is not that easy. However, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) have supplied a website (www.watemyyard.org) to help. The site takes data from a network of weather stations around Central Texas and weighs information entered by the user to compute the best sprinkler run times.

The site has tools allowing users to fill in information about location, turf, the types and precipitation rates of sprinkler heads on the lawn, head or dripline emitter spac-

ing and a few other items.

Hit "view watering recommendation" and the site will give the answer.

To find the precipitation rate, set out several empty tuna cans on a station and run it for 15 minutes. Measure the depth of the water caught by the cans, average the depths, and multiply the answer by four to get the hourly precipitation rate. Most systems have stations with different types of heads, so sampling precipitation by each type of head is needed.

To determine emitter spacing, check with product documents for sprinkler heads, or gently uncover a length of dripline and measure the distance between emitters. For folks unable to unwilling to do these measurements, it's no problem.

The tool has the ability to

function with this information missing and still come up with an adequate answer. Users may also sign up for automated updates by email.

When working with your sprinkler system, remember Horseshoe Bay remains in a water conservation mode with twice-weekly watering.

Odd-numbered addresses may water from 7 p.m. Saturday until 10 a.m. Sunday and from 7 p.m. Wednesday until 10 a.m. Thursday.

Even-numbered addresses water from 7 p.m. Thursday until 10 a.m. Friday and from 7 p.m. Sunday until 10 a.m. Monday. Commercial and multi-family addresses water from 7 p.m. Tuesday until 10 a.m. Wednesday and from 7 p.m. Friday until 10 a.m. Saturday.

Drip irrigation is exempt from Horseshoe Bay's water-

ing rules and may run at any time.

Homes along the lake with LCRA contracts use the LCRA's schedule allowing even-numbered addresses to water Thursday and Sunday. Odd addresses water on Wednesday and Saturday. However, no watering is allowed from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For other questions about water use rules, or to schedule a free landscape irrigation assessment, call Horseshoe Bay City Hall at 830-598-9973.

Conservation Information is also available on the City's website at www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/195/WaterConservation.

