

News Column for use 8/2/2021
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River Valley Extension District
7/29/2021

Is My Lawn Still Alive?

Is your lawn turning brown as it does through the winter? During the hot periods of the summer, lawns will enter dormancy. Normally, a healthy lawn can stay dormant for a good five weeks and still recover. After the five weeks are up, it is important to keep the crown hydrated because if the crown dies, the plant dies.

The recommendations differ for a lawn that was overwatered or received so much rain this spring that it produced a limited root system. Such a lawn may die unless allowed to slowly enter dormancy. This is done by shutting off the water gradually. For example, instead of watering several times a week, wait a week before irrigating. Then don't water again for two weeks. Thereafter, water every two weeks as described below.

Apply about 1/4 inch of water every two weeks to hydrate the crown. This will be enough to hydrate the crown but not enough to encourage weed germination and growth.

If you are wondering if the turf is still alive, pull up an individual plant and separate the leaves from the crown. The crown is the area between the leaves and the roots. If it is still hard and not papery and dry, the plant is still alive.

When rains and cooler weather arrive, the turf should come out of dormancy. However, we will probably have to deal with weeds that germinate before the turfgrass grows enough to canopy over and provide enough shade to keep weed seeds from sprouting. If you have any questions please contact Kelsey Hatesohl at the Washington Office at 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.