Botany 1203

Signature Assignment

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Overwatering the lawn is a big problem, especially here in Utah. A typical house in Utah can use twice as much water as necessary (conservewater.utah.gov). People waste gallons of water drowning their grass and other plants. It is harmful to plants to overwater, and it is also wasteful. Watering too much can drown plant’s roots, put stress on the plants, and wastes money. I chose to write about this topic because I believe it is a big problem, and people don’t know the actual effects that this can have on their lawn and the environment.

Overwatering can cause damage to plants. In grass, the soil under the sod is composed of sand, silt, clay, and porous spaces. When you water the grass, the water fills those spaces and pushes out the oxygen. However, watering daily keeps those spaces filled with water instead of oxygen, which is important for growth. When the roots don’t get enough oxygen, they will suffocate and die, leaving the grass with a very poor root system (sodco.net). When the roots die, this leaves the plant very vulnerable to disease and insect damage. This can cause huge problems with the overall health of your lawn.

Pumping unneeded water can waste your money, as well as electricity. Your lawn won’t die simply from underwatering, it will be less healthy if you overwater it, so don’t be afraid to cut back on water usage. If you use lawn fertilizer as well as overwater, this can be very bad for the environment. Fertilizer will be washed away from the roots, before they are able to absorb any of it. Aside from your lawn not getting nutrients, this also pollutes the ground water with nitrate. This can cause things like harmful algal blooms, or toxic algae. All because you watered your lawn too much.

So now you may be wondering how you can fix this terrible problem. You certainly don’t want your lawn to die, and you definitely don’t want to cause ground water pollution. Well, it’s not that hard to increase watering efficiency. To start, you need to know how much water your lawn needs. An average lawn needs about one inch of water each week to maximize health. One way to determine how much you are watering, is to set containers out in your lawn while watering. Once that container fills up to one inch, that is how much you should be watering. You can also water in the early morning, between 4 a.m. and 10 a.m., which allows the water to soak into the soil before being evaporated. Only water once or twice a week, sticking to that average of about one inch per week. This is better than frequent, shallow watering, which can lead to less developed roots. Remember to distribute water evenly to prevent puddling or runoff.

In conclusion, overwatering is a big problem which can waste money and water. It is also very bad for the environment and can pollute the groundwater. Watering your lawn too much can cause the roots to become weaker, and just make your lawn unhealthier in general. If people stop wasting water, not only will everyone’s water bill be much less, their lawns will look better too.

Sources:

“Overwatering Tips and Resources.” *Reasons Why You Shouldn't Overwater Your Lawn or Turf Lawn Care Tips from Sodco*, SODCO, [www.sodco.net/tips-and-resources/overwatering](http://www.sodco.net/tips-and-resources/overwatering).

“Outdoor Watering Guide.” *Utah Water Conservation*, Utah Division of Water Resources, conservewater.utah.gov/reslawnguide.html.

“How to Water Your Lawn Wisely.” *Pennington.com*, www.pennington.com/all-products/grass-seed/resources/manage-your-lawn-and-water-use-wisely.