

New sod: how often & how long

For newly laid St. Augustine, Zoysia, Bermuda and Bahia sod. Seeds, plugs, sprigs and specialist turf may differ.

Three simple rules: Water early in the morning. Skip if rain has already wet the roots. Stop if water puddles or runs off.

Stage	How often	What to do
Installation day	Water promptly	Wet the sod and the soil directly beneath it. Check seams and edges.
First 7-10 days	2-3 short cycles/day in dry weather	Fixed spray: about 5-10 min/cycle. Rotors: about 15-20 min/cycle. Keep moist, never soggy.
Next 7-10 days	1 time/day when needed	Apply 1/4-1/2 inch: about 10-20 min at the example spray rate, or 30-60 min at the example rotor rate.
Then, until firmly rooted	2-3 times/week when needed	Apply 1/4-1/2 inch. When sod resists a gentle tug, move to the seasonal lawn schedule. Cool weather can delay rooting.

Minutes depend on output. The examples assume spray heads at 1.5 inches/hour or rotors at 0.5 inch/hour. Match your actual rate using page 4. Moist soil is the goal, not standing water.

When can you reduce watering?

Gently tug a sod corner. Once roots grip the soil below, move toward the seasonal routine on page 3. Rooting often takes about 3-4 weeks; cool weather can delay it. Keep heavy traffic off unrooted sod.

Starting guidance for South Florida. Reduce for wet soil, shade or poor drainage. Follow local watering rules. [Current rules](#).

UF/IFAS: [Establishing Your Florida Lawn](#) · [Fertilization and Irrigation Needs](#).

New plants: water the root ball

Water at planting. Use this establishment routine in every season; page 3 explains seasonal adjustments. Skip if rain has already kept the root ball moist.

New shrubs / hedges

About 2 waterings/week; up to 3-4 in hot, dry conditions.

For a typical 3-gallon shrub: about 1 gallon per watering, directly on the root ball. Continue establishment care for about 20-28 weeks.

New landscape trees

2-3 waterings/week at first; about weekly after the first few months.

About 2-3 gallons per inch of trunk diameter per watering. Example: a 2-inch tree gets 4-6 gallons. Continue until established.

New palms

Often daily for the first few weeks; then taper as roots establish.

Wet the original root ball evenly. Palm size and nursery stock vary; there is no single gallon or minute setting for all palms. Container palms may need regular care for 6-8 months.

Easy drip examples

A typical 3-gallon shrub receiving 1 gallon from two 1-GPH emitters: **30 minutes**. A 2-inch tree receiving 4-6 gallons from emitters totaling 4 GPH: **60-90 minutes**. These examples assume working emitters wet the original root ball evenly.

Two things to remember

- Wet grass does not prove the new root ball received water.
- Wet soil plus wilting means investigate, not automatically more water. Field-dug palms and large relocated trees need a species-specific transplant plan.

Starting guidance for South Florida. Reduce for wet soil, shade or poor drainage. Follow local watering rules. [Current rules](#).

UF/IFAS: [Establishing Shrubs](#) · [Planting Trees](#) · [Transplanting Palms](#).

Seasons: lawn, shrubs, trees & palms

The lawn column is a starting plan for rooted St. Augustine, Zoysia and Bermuda kept green in South Florida. New plants use page 2 first.

Season	Lawn: start here	New shrubs, trees & palms
Winter (Dec-Feb)	About 1 time/week for a green lawn; skip damp weeks.	Keep the new-plant routine, but skip when the root ball is moist. Cool weather usually slows drying.
Spring (Mar-May)	About 2 times/week when needed.	Heat and wind can dry new root balls quickly. Use the more frequent end of the establishment range only if drying.
Summer (Jun-Sep)	0-2 times/week; soaking rain can replace a watering.	Check after storms: rain may miss a root ball sheltered by foliage. Skip wet root balls and saturated beds.
Fall (Oct-Nov)	About 1-2 times/week when needed.	As rain fades, resume only the cycles plants need. Reduce again when cooler weather slows drying.

Once shrubs, trees and palms are established

Established shrubs: many site-suited shrubs need no scheduled irrigation during normal rainfall. Water during dry spells when the root zone dries and plants need it. Drought-sensitive plants may need more.

Established trees: during prolonged drought, deep watering about every 2-4 weeks can help before canopy damage appears. Aim to wet the upper 12 inches of soil where practical. Newly planted trees use their establishment routine.

Established palms: needs vary by species. Some tolerate drought; others need more consistent moisture. Avoid keeping any palm's roots constantly wet.

Same runtime math, different frequency. The sprinkler or drip output sets the minutes. Plant age, species, weather and soil set how often water is needed. Pots, vegetables, annual flowers and moisture-loving species need their own routine.

Skip when rain has watered the roots. Stop for puddling or runoff. Follow local watering rules.

UF/IFAS: [Shrubs](#) · [Landscape irrigation](#) · [Mature trees in drought](#) · [South Florida palms](#).

Your grass type & timer settings

Grass	Watering approach
Zoysia	Water when dry-stress signs appear; usually 1/2-3/4 inch per needed watering.
Bermuda	Water when blades fold, wilt or look blue-gray; usually 1/2-3/4 inch per needed watering.
Bahia	Water as needed rather than keeping a fixed green-lawn calendar; usually 1/2-3/4 inch when needed.
Seashore paspalum	Use a cultivar- and site-specific irrigation plan.

Zoysia is not automatically a low-water lawn. Bahia and Bermuda can brown into drought dormancy. Paspalum is high-maintenance specialist turf, not a simple home-lawn substitute. Specialty guidance: zenlandscapegroup.com/specialty-grasses.html.

Sprinkler examples: delivering 1/2 inch

Head	Assumed output	Minutes / zone
Fixed spray	1.5 inches/hour	20 min
Gear rotor / rotary nozzle	0.5 inch/hour	60 min

For 3/4 inch at the same output, multiply minutes by 1.5. Check output once with straight-sided cups: if 15 minutes gives 1/4 inch, use 30 minutes for 1/2 inch. Stop for runoff; allow soak time.

Drip: add the emitters serving ONE plant

Total flow	For 1 gallon	For 4 gallons
1 GPH	60 min	240 min
2 GPH	30 min	120 min
4 GPH	15 min	60 min
8 GPH	7.5 min	30 min

Two 1-GPH emitters = 2 GPH. Minutes = target gallons ÷ total GPH × 60. Inline dripline, microsprays and adjustable bubblers need their own flow setting. The head's name alone does not determine minutes.

Use the new-sod schedule until rooted. Use new-plant care until established. All times assume the displayed output; skip wet soil and follow local watering rules.

UF/IFAS: [Zoysia](#) · [Bermuda](#) · [Bahia](#) · [Paspalum](#) · [Timer settings](#).