

**Q** I had trouble with powdery mildew last summer, what can I do this summer to reduce the problem?

- Missoula County

**A** Powdery mildew is a fungal disease that is spread by spores carried on the wind. Conditions that are favorable for the spread of the disease include temperatures in the range of 68-81 °F, wet leaves, shade and over-fertilized plants.

Here are three strategies to help control this problem. First, avoid over-fertilizing with nitrogen. Second, water with soaker hoses rather than spraying water from above, or if this is not possible, water in the morning so the sun can dry the leaves. Third, thin plants early in the season so they will have good air movement around them as they mature.



**Q** My lawn is getting dried out, how much should I water it?

- Roosevelt County

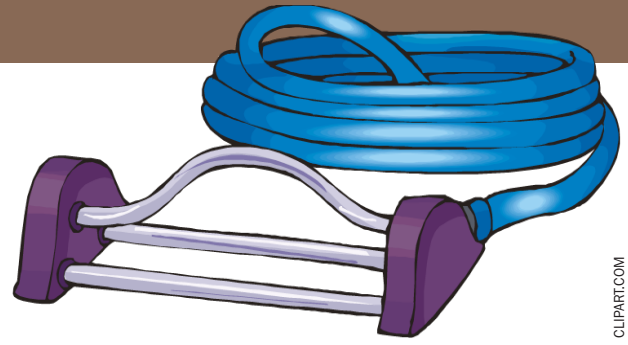
**A** Keeping the grass of an existing lawn green and lush looking in the summer can be challenging. Some grasses are just not adaptable for our hot, dry Montana summers, but others, like Kentucky Blue Grass, can do well if properly cared for.

Here are a few tips that can help maintain a great-looking summer lawn.

- Set your lawn mower blade height to at least 2 inches, this helps keep the soil cooler and reduces evaporation losses.
- Avoid watering in the middle of the day when evaporation loss is very high.
- When watering an established lawn, apply 1-2 inches of water every 3 to 5 days; if it's been really hot, every 3 days may be required, but cooler and overcast days will reduce the need to perhaps every 5 days.
- Grass does best when roots are deeply watered. Keep in mind your soil texture, as clay soils have a greater water holding capacity than a sandy soil. Therefore, you may need to water grass planted in sandy loam soil more often.



Do you have Master Gardener questions? Send them to: [extensionmagazine@montana.edu](mailto:extensionmagazine@montana.edu).



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