



Waukesh COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS AND LAND USE

Date: May 19, 2009

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jayne Jenks, 262-896-8305

Brown—The New Green!

Seems everyone wants to be green these days—from reusable grocery bags to recycled t-shirts. Going green for our lawns ought to be easy since they are already green. But consider this—letting your lawn go dormant, or brown for the summer is the new standard in “green” lawn care.

Most lawns are planted in cool season grasses. These grasses grow best in the cool, wet months of spring and fall. When the weather gets hot and dry, their natural response is to go dormant and turn brown until cooler, wetter weather returns. Many people are inclined to battle this natural response and water their lawns to keep them green. This uses large quantities of water and can actually harm your lawn if not done properly.

To water your lawn properly, water thoroughly and less frequently to encourage deeper roots. Shallow, frequent watering actually causes shallow root growth. Watering should be done in the early morning or late evening, otherwise most of the water is evaporated and never reaches the roots. Use a can to measure the amount of water applied. Turf grass needs about one inch of water per week. Be sure to subtract any rainfall amounts from what you apply.

To simplify and “green” your lawn, consider not watering at all. Allow the grass to go dormant. It won’t need fertilizing or mowing while it is dormant. This reduces water use, gas for mowing, fertilizers and time. Other ways to keep a “green” lawn include keeping the clippings on the lawn. The clippings are a great source of nitrogen for your lawn. Before fertilizing, be sure to do a soil test and then add only what is needed. This ensures that your lawn will get the proper nutrients that it needs. Consider hand pulling weeds before they go to seed instead of using chemicals.

To make sure that your “green” lawn doesn’t green our lakes and rivers, keep grass clippings off the roads and pavement. Sweep fertilizers off of sidewalks and driveways and onto the lawn where they belong. If you must water, make sure you are not watering the sidewalk or driveway. This will only create runoff, which will carry pollutants straight to our waters.

It’s alright to have a brown lawn this summer. Brown really is the “green” standard in lawn care. And a “green” lawn helps conserve water and keep our rivers and streams clean. We can have clean water—One Brown Lawn at a Time.

###