

The right amount of water

Everyone's lawn is different, and everyone's sprinklers put out water at a different rate. Here are two methods to figure out how often to water your lawn and how long to run your sprinklers each time.

What you'll need

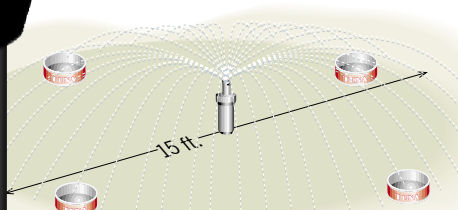
■ Three or four tuna-fish cans. ■ Sprinkler system or hose/sprinkler setup. ■ A measuring ruler.

1 For this more-precise method you'll need the "lawn watering guide" from *The Arizona Republic's* weather page that runs daily. It will say something like "0.40 inch is needed if you last watered three days ago." We'll explain how to use that number shortly.

A. Scatter the cans around the grass where the sprinklers are sure to reach in an area about 15 feet by 15 feet; add more if your lawn is larger.

B. Turn the sprinklers on for only 15 minutes, then turn them off.

C. Measure how much water collected in each can and then determine an average amount. To do that, add the totals from each can and divide by the number of cans you used. That's how much water your sprinklers put out in 15 minutes.

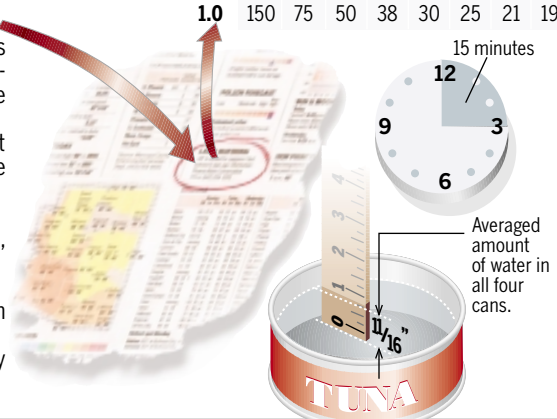


D. To come up with your ideal time, use the table to the right (clip it and tape it somewhere handy). Find the number from *The Republic's* lawn-watering guide and match it as closely as you can to a number on the left-hand side of the table. Then take the amount of water your sprinklers put out and match it to the numbers on the top of the table. Where the rows and columns intersect is the time you need to water. For example, if the newspaper said to use 0.40 of an inch and you measured about 11/16 of an inch in your tuna cans, you need to water for about 9 minutes every three days.

Watering-time conversion table

In minutes

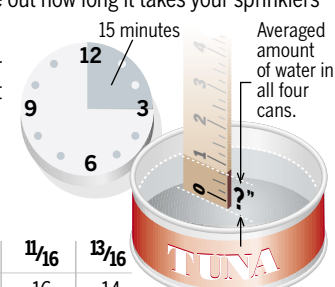
	Inches of water in tuna can							
	1/8	3/16	5/16	3/8	1/2	5/8	11/16	13/16
0.1	15	8	5	4	3	3	2	2
0.2	30	15	10	8	6	5	4	4
0.3	45	23	15	11	9	8	6	6
0.4	60	30	20	15	12	10	9	8
0.5	75	38	25	19	15	13	11	9
0.6	90	45	30	23	18	15	13	11
0.7	105	53	35	26	21	18	15	13
0.8	120	60	40	30	24	20	17	15
0.9	135	68	45	34	27	23	19	17
1.0	150	75	50	38	30	25	21	19



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Your goal for this simpler method is to give your lawn three-quarters of an inch of water, which is about how much grass needs to wet the root zone. To figure out how long it takes your sprinklers to produce three-quarters of an inch:

A. Scatter four tuna cans around the yard and run the sprinklers for 15 minutes. Measure the water in each can and average the amount of water by **totaling** the measurements and dividing by four.



B. Use this table to figure out **how long** your sprinklers need to run to give the grass three-quarters of an inch of water:

Minutes to run your sprinklers

Average measurement (inches)	1/8	3/16	5/16	3/8	1/2	5/8	11/16	13/16
Minutes to run sprinklers	112	56	37	28	22	18	16	14

C. Now to figure out **how often** to run the sprinklers, use this table. Use the top row of numbers for a typical summer Bermuda lawn. Use the bottom row for an overseeded winter lawn.

Number of days between watering cycles

Lawn type	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Summer	30	21	14	7	4	3	3	4	4	6	14	30
Winter	14	10	7	4	3	Grass dies out				3	10	14