



## Tall Fescue and Heat Stress

Greetings Southern Springs! As you are all experiencing this abnormally hot and dry weather, it has already taken a toll on the landscape, especially the turf. We aren't even in the 'dog days of summer' yet, and we are already feeling the effects. As many of you can see, or personally experiencing, the turf is starting to stress and/or turn brown in some areas. There are two reasons for this: Lack of Rain and Extreme Heat. Heat Stress can cause a more immediate effect on the turf than lack of water. Yes, you do need to bump up your irrigation, but there is no protection against the heat.

Fescue is referred to as a 'cool season' turf grass. This is because it relies on the cool nights to recover from the heat of the day. When your overnight nights hover between 70 -75 degrees, the turf has a challenge of building enough energy to grow the next day. This is why you'll see the Fescue slow down drastically during the Summer.

So, what can you do?? First, ensure you are irrigating adequately throughout the week. This will not only help deliver the vital hydration it needs to sustain life, but it will also help lower the soil temperature which will help eliminate some of the stress on the roots. Please remember to not overwater your turf as this may contribute to fungal issues. This approach is fairly common to many folks but in fact, you can create more damage by overwatering.

Sporadic areas of brown turf is normal to see during this time. These are called 'dry spots'. They are most commonly seen where there are coverage issues with irrigation, areas along hard surfaces where they collect high heat (i.e.: Sidewalks, Driveways, Curbs), and areas where there may be compaction. Aside from irrigation coverage, there's not a lot that can be done right now.

To recap, here's what to do:

- 1) Perform an irrigation check to ensure you are getting good coverage.
- 2) Ensure you are providing your turf with adequate amounts of water, but don't overwater.
- 3) Investigate these dry spots to determine if there are coverage issues. If so, correct to ensure those areas are receiving enough water.

We hope this information has been helpful. If you have any questions on Tall Fescue, there are many great articles online that discuss common issues. Thank you



Example of Heat Stress