

TVN MOWING INFORMATION---Proper mowing height to keep a good lawn

Cool-season lawns like Kentucky Bluegrass should be mowed about two times per week in the spring and fall, and about one time per week during the summer. There is no one mowing height for all grass types, however, for Kentucky Bluegrass the recommended mowing height is 3 (optimum) to 4 inches (as a maximum.) The general rule is not to cut more than 1/3 of the grass height off at once. *So if it gets away from you, you will need to mow it multiple times on different days (do not scalp it) to get it down to the right height or you can damage your turf.*

Lawns mowed between 3 to 3.5" out-compete weeds and tolerate grubs more successfully due to deeper root systems. Your grass grows their roots in the spring when they begin actively growing to the depth that you mow to, so mowing too short makes your roots more shallow and more susceptible to drought problems and diseases.

Traditional Kentucky bluegrass varieties have relatively shallow roots, which typically mean a lower tolerance for heat and drought. *Mowing too low is one of the most common mistakes people make and thus damaging their turf.* Below are some important points concerning mowing height:

- **What Determines Mowing Height:** The correct mowing height is based on the structure of a grass species and not so much on personal preference. Each grass species has a minimum cutting height. Cutting below the minimum cutting height for your grass type will only weaken the turf root system and allow for weed invasion.
- **Blade Length and Photosynthesis:** It is important that you mow your grass to maintain sufficient blade length to continue photosynthesis. Photosynthesis takes part in the green blades. Photosynthesis is what produces the carbohydrates required for plant life. In fact, carbohydrates, not fertilizer, is the food source all plant life. Fertilizer provides nutrients needed for plant function and the production of carbohydrates.
- **Mowing Height and Root Depth:** There is a direct link between blade length and root depth. *The taller the grass blades are maintained, the deeper the roots go into the ground.* If you routinely set your cutting height at a low setting, your grass roots will also be much shorter with our cool season varieties in Illinois. Your grass cutting height is very important.

In summary cool season grasses like Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Perennial Ryegrass, and Fine Fescue all have a minimum mow height of 1.5 inches or you will damage the growing point of the crown of the turf plant. However, they shouldn't be maintained at that level. Always remember that standard grass cutting height is 3" to 3.5" with a max of 4" if you have that preference. Beyond 4", the air movement can be restricted and diseases can make their way into your turf.

