

## **Dripping Springs Water Supply Corporation: “Green Grass Anyone?”**

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It’s a wonderful life we find ourselves in today with all sorts of easily accessible cyber information whether it be the good, the bad and the ugly kind of information. For those of you paying close attention and want to look them up, how many movie titles did you recognize above, oh Siri? Reel it back in George Bailey, this isn’t the old building and loan business we’re trying to save, it’s about your grass and conserving your resources.

I will start off by saying that not every homeowner’s goal is to install an extensive irrigation system with a lawn thick with green grass when the natural look is more pleasing to you and to your bank account. Further, it’s possible your neighborhood homeowner’s association doesn’t require lush yards and groomed hedges. If xeriscaping with touches of native plants mixed in makes you happy, then well done, you are conserving both your water and financial resources while storing up your savings! For those of you who can take advantage of minimalizing your landscaping design, you will maximize your monthly savings and equally you will be conserving water. The other 90 something percent of you who lug your mowers about each week, let’s keep pushing forward.

This next section, fertilizers, should provide you with a nice overlay of yard nutrition, just enough to stand your ground at Trivial Pursuit not Jeopardy. If you are mowing, then you are probably fertilizing too. I can almost promise you one thing for sure, none of us fertilize our lawns just so we have the amazing opportunity to mow each week, we like green grass and I cannot lie. So why do we fertilize our grass each year? To be perfectly clear, we fertilize the soil and not the grass because our soil can lack some of the 16 essential elements that support healthy and vibrant plant growth. Fertilizer, by definition, is a substance such as manure or a chemical mixture used to make soil more fertile. I’m sure we could enlist an equal panel of homeowners that use big box fertilizer products and those who use organic fertilizer products, but which product you prefer is not the focus today, it is about information and the goal of conserving your resources. An interesting and important point to keep in mind regarding synthetic fertilizers verses organic fertilizers is that your grass cannot tell the difference as long as the soil receives the nutrients it requires. Some people think of “synthetic chemical fertilizers” as a negative phrase with the phrase “organic fertilizers” being a positive one. Please keep in mind that the word organic when referring to fertilizers does not mean the same as, nor even close to, the standards of cultivation that is associated with food production. Organic Fertilizers use plant, animal waste or powdered minerals to comprise their Nitrogen/Phosphorus/Potassium (NPK) mixture. We could debate which product to use, but again the type of fertilizer you use makes no difference to your grass as long as the product is properly applied then it is safe for your lawns and the environment, so be sure to read the instructions listed on the bag and use the appropriate spreader setting. Fertilizers can become pollutants when they are misused no matter which product you select, synthetic or organic. You can help the environment and protect our water resources by avoiding fertilizer application to hard surfaces such as driveways where it can be washed inadvertently into storm drains and waterways. All nutrients in fertilizers, no matter the source product you select, must be broken down into macronutrients NPK, the 3 main soil essential elements required for healthy vegetation growth. Nitrogen promotes the green color of your grass, Phosphorus stimulates root growth, and Potassium helps your grass withstand stress such as drought and

disease. 10 additional sources of soil nutrients are derived from micronutrients (7 elements) and secondary soil nutrients (3 elements) which are necessary but in small amounts. The final 3 elements are comprised of Carbon/Hydrogen/Oxygen, these elements are provided to your grass from the air and from watering. As fertilizer products vary, be sure to check the product labeling for specific watering needs as outside temperatures and slow release fertilizers have different requirements. Now that you are a bit more fertilizer informed; you can venture to your favorite lawncare retailer with confidence.

No matter which fertilizer you believe is best for your yard, you will need to water your grass regularly if you want it to be green, but be waterwise as droughts in Central Texas are never that far away and you may run into watering restrictions this summer. To help you offset some watering demand and conserve resources, spreading organic mulch around your plants and trees is not only decorative but it provides a valuable function by protecting vegetation from the summer heat. Your yard may not require watering until the late spring so waiting to irrigate by taking advantage of seasonal rain is another opportunity to conserve your water and financial resources. Once the time comes to irrigate your yard with no watering restrictions, one inch per week should be more than enough to keep your grass happy. Watering in the early morning or late during the evening is recommended to avoid the summer sun and whirling breezes that will evaporate your efforts and savings. To maximize all your resources, be sure not to overwater the lawn as runoff will remove those macronutrients (NPK) and cause possible yellowing of the grass. No matter which product you apply to your yard or what neighborhood you live in, Pottersville or Bedford Falls, your grass may be greener now, but you'll still have to mow it.

**DSWSC** would like to remind our members to contact our office, **512-858-7897**, if you have updated your personal contact information such as email addresses, phone numbers or billing Auto-Pay credit card accounts. Visit our website **[www.drippingspringswater.com](http://www.drippingspringswater.com)** to review recent news, meeting notices and resources, all at your convenience. Thank you for taking the time to not only read this article, but for helping **DSWSC** serve you more effectively. *Written and submitted by DSWSC Staff.*