

No Rain? No Pain!

NINE SIMPLE STEPS TO KEEP YOUR LAWN HEALTHY WHEN THE FORECAST IS HOT AND DRY FOR WEEKS ON END.

- 1 Build soil.** The organic matter in your soil acts like a sponge, holding moisture and dispersing it as the soil dries out. Add organic matter to the soil to increase its ability to retain water. Simply recycle grass clippings and fall leaves back onto the lawn when you mow, spread half an inch of home-made compost on your lawn each fall, and you will continually replenish the soil's organic matter.
- 2 Feed organic.** Natural fertilizers, such as Ringer Lawn Restore, break down gradually and release their nutrients as they are needed by the grass. Synthetic fertilizers stimulate fast, unnatural, and thirsty growth, and they're often high in salts, which dehydrate the soil.
- 3 Go deep.** The deeper roots grow, the more moisture they can access. Encourage the roots to grow deep and wide by soaking your lawn well, then letting the soil dry out before you water again. When you sprinkle the grass frequently, the roots grow close to the surface, which dries out first.
- 4 Don't water.** Grasses in the North go dormant in summer; in the South, they stop growing during the winter. Don't be tempted to water your lawn during these periods—when its color naturally fades to brown—to try to keep it green. Half an inch of water every other week is sufficient to help the
- grass crowns and roots survive, without prompting the lawn to break dormancy.
- 5 Mow higher.** Tall grass grows roots deeper in the soil, and on top it shades the soil from the sun, slowing evaporation. To maximize the lawn's drought-resistance, cut the grass at your mower's highest setting.
- 6 Eliminate weeds.** Crabgrass and other weeds suck moisture away from grass. Concern Weed Prevention Plus, made with nontoxic corn gluten meal, stops a wide variety of lawn weeds from germinating. Apply the natural herbicide in spring and fall.
- 7 Keep sharp.** A dull lawn-mower blade tears grass, turning it brown at the tips and leaving it thirstier than cleanly cut leaves.
- 8 Get tough.** Where "hot and dry" is the forecast every year, you need grass that's adapted to tough conditions. Buffalo grass, a native of the West that grows almost everywhere, holds up through lengthy droughts.
- 9 Repeat and repeat.** Year in and year out, whatever climate you live in, these simple practices not only protect grass from droughts, they keep your lawn healthy and safe, thick and lush.

HOW MUCH WATER? YOUR LAWN NEEDS ABOUT HALF AN INCH OF WATER EVERY OTHER WEEK TO STAY ALIVE, AND 1 INCH EVERY WEEK TO KEEP GROWING DURING ITS ACTIVE SEASON. PUT A CUP OR BUCKET IN THE SPRINKLER ZONE; WHEN IT HAS AN INCH OF WATER IN IT, SO DOES THE SOIL.