



Mow at the right height to maintain turf

As you drive through your neighborhood, it's likely you'll see lawns in various stages of growth. Some homeowners like the closely mowed look that resembles a golf course putting green. While it does look nice and tidy, that look may not be the healthiest for the type of grass you have.

Each species of turf has an optimum cutting height for different seasons and for different conditions, such as shade availability and moisture. Mowing at the right height is vital to lawn health.

Before firing up the mower, make sure the blade is sharp. A dull blade can damage the grass. Sharpen the blade as needed throughout the mowing season.

Warm-season grasses such as Bermudagrass are cut lower in the summer months to promote lateral spread and the "tight" turf look. Ideally, Bermudagrass should be cut at 0.5 to 0.75 inches during this time. Later in the fall and through the beginning of spring, if mowing is necessary, cut it at 1 to 1.25 inches.

Cool-season grasses such as Kentucky Bluegrass and tall fescue should be cut at about 2.5 inches up to 3.0 inches in summer, and 2.0 to 2.5 inches from fall to spring.

Whether you mow it yourself or you've assigned that task to the teenager in the home, cutting low isn't the right option to hopefully extend the time between mowing. Cutting turfgrasses below their recommended height will discourage deep rooting. It also may cause the turf to thin, because it is less able to withstand heavy traffic and environmental stresses such as low soil moisture and extreme temperatures.

Cutting newer hybrid bermudagrasses above their recommended height may produce a stemmy turf, which is characterized by leaves being produced near the end of upright stems. This kind of turf is prone to scalping. However, the turf that's growing in shady areas should be maintained at a slightly higher cut to increase leaf area to compensate for lower light levels.

As the temperature begins to cool in the fall, cut the turfgrass higher to provide insulation for lower temperatures.

Oklahoma State University Extension offers additional [gardening and lawncare tips](#) online.

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