MOWING HEIGHT AND WATER MANAGEMENT

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Turfgrass managers are in agreement that inaccurate irrigation techniques can waste water, money, and result in poor turfgrass performance resulting in increased management inputs. However, there seems to be little agreement as to what proper irrigation techniques actually are and there exist several clichés that deserve scientific consideration. As an example, some prescribe to deep infrequent irrigation while others follow the light frequent dogma. Additionally, some change cultural practices (such as raising mowing height in the summer) to relieve plant stress when water is limited.

This stop is held at a research site designed to make conclusions about changes in mowing height for better turf performance in the heat of the summer. The research plot treatments are:

1) Mowed at 2-inches for the whole season
2) Mowed at 2-inches until July 14 and then raised to a 3" mowing height
3) Mowed at 3-inches for the entire season
4) Mowed at 3-inches until July 14 then lowered to a 2" mowing height
5) Mowed at 4-inches until July 14 then lowered to 3-inches and lowered further to 2-inches in early August

Clearly, results from the study will not be known on Field Day, but the intriguing hypothesis about which management style will require the least amount of water will lead to some interesting conversation about what we know and do not know about mowing height and water use.