



UWA Turf Research Newsletter

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Welcome and Thank You

Irrigation has recommenced at the UWA Turf Research Facility at Shenton Park. Both turfgrass research projects are well underway, with Gaus Azam and Sam Flottmann busy managing the turfgrass plots, plus co-ordinating turfgrass and soil sampling.



A special thank you to the team at Mow Master, who collected and serviced our mower in time for the 2014/2015 irrigation season!

Soil Amendment Project: Update

This project is comparing the effectiveness of a range of soil amendments to increase the water holding capacity of our sandy soils. The main aim of the project is to evaluate whether soil amendments can decrease the irrigation requirements of turfgrass.

After a period of very little growth over winter the plots have greened up over spring in response to increasing soil temperatures and two fertiliser additions. However, some carry over effects from last summer are still visible. The low irrigation plots have lower water contents 48 hours after irrigation, and a greater amount of clippings, than the high irrigation plots. The low irrigation plots have also produced more seed heads than the high irrigation plots.

Experimental irrigation rates started mid-October with low irrigation plots receiving 50% of ET replacement (twice a week), and high irrigation plots 75% (three times a week). This difference in irrigation rate has already affected plot colour in mid-November. Also, West Coast Turf is thanked for planting an extra 1.5m of turfgrass on the northern side border so as to decrease edge effects!

Water Allocation Project: Update

The Water Allocation Project is comparing the effectiveness of three water allocations (5000, 6250 or 7500 kL/ha per year) to maintain turfgrass growth and quality. In September we commenced evaluating each water allocation for a third, and final season.

Measuring turfgrass colour is key to assessing turfgrass quality under the different water allocations, and also tells us how well the wetting agent is performing.

We measure turfgrass colour using a "chromameter", which records a 'hue angle'. The greater the hue angle, the greener the turfgrass. Kikuyugrass with a hue angle greater than 97 is considered to be adequately green for Local Government parks.

So how has turfgrass colour vary with each water allocation? In 2013/14 a water allocation of 7500 kL/ha produced turfgrass with adequate colour (i.e., hue angle > 97), except in late summer (Fig. 1). Lowering the water allocation to 5000 kL/ha meant colour was less than ideal for 5 months of the year.

Colour was good all year round for turfgrass allocated of 7500 kL/ ha when a wetting agent was applied.

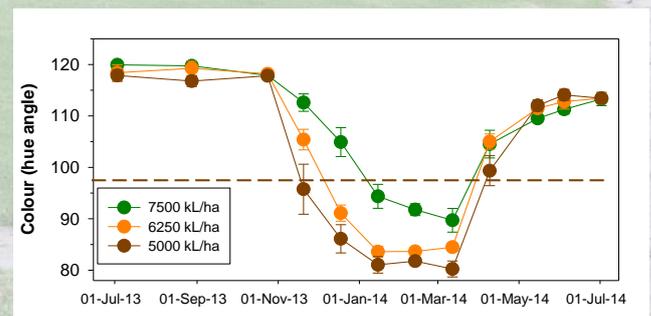


Fig.1 Turfgrass colour in 2013/14

2015 UWA Turf Research Open Day

An informal Open Day will be held at the UWA Turf Research Facility on Wednesday 18th February. The Open Day will provide an opportunity for you and your staff to assess various soil amendments and water allocations are effecting turfgrass quality over summer. Further details of the event will be sent to you (via email) in the New Year.

For further information contact A/Prof Louise Barton (louise.barton@uwa.edu.au; 6488 2543), A/Prof Pieter Poot (pieter.poot@uwa.edu.au), or Prof Tim Colmer (timothy.colmer@uwa.edu.au).