

# CHEROKEE CHANNEL

WWW.CHEROKEEMETRO.ORG / 719-597-5080

SEPTEMBER 2009

PICTURED: CIMARRON EASTRIDGE PARK

## Rain, Rain Everywhere and Still Two Days a Week?

July brought cooler than average temperatures and an abundance of rain. In fact, 3.82 inches fell (noaa.gov) – .97 inches above average – quenching thirsty landscapes, decreasing irrigation demand and saving you money on your water bill. It also prompted some customers to ask why we are still on a two-day watering schedule with so much rain. While precipitation positively impacts our water supply, its effect does not resolve our water challenges.

It's important to remember that our water conservation plan is due to legal issues and not drought. Although drought plays a role, it is not the primary reason for the selected schedule. Let's take a closer look at some of the key issues impacting the number of watering days:



Cherokee water tanks: Three and four million gallon capacity

### Annual Pumping Limitations

The wells currently used to deliver a clean and safe supply of water to the District have annual pumping limitations. These limitations allow Cherokee to pump a specific amount of water from the wells annually. Once we reach the limit, whether it is August or December, we can no longer pump water from the aquifer until the next calendar year.

### Pumping Volume & Storage Capacity

Summer irrigation demands keep our pumps and wells running nearly 24/7 and our tanks in a constant fill-drain cycle. Since lawn watering occurs four of seven days each week that leaves a total of three days to refill our tanks between each two-day cycle – one day between Sunday and Tuesday and two days between Wednesday and Saturday. Without this opportunity to replenish our tanks, irrigation would create a demand greater than our pumping capabilities.

### Pueblo West Water

For two years Cherokee has purchased raw water from Pueblo West that is treated by Colorado Springs Utilities. This water bridges the gap between our existing supply and increased summer irrigation demand but comes with substantial cost and limited availability.

By combining these three factors with historical consumption data and anticipated irrigation demand, staff and the Board of Directors have determined we can supply enough water for two days of irrigation per week without exceeding any limitations. We always welcome the rain with open arms for the temporary relief it provides, but we'll continue to look for reliable, long-term solutions to diversify our water resources.

## Watering Schedule

Stage 2

April 1 – October 31, 2009

Odd Addresses Tue/Sat	Even Addresses Wed/Sun
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Duration: Maximum of 2 hours

Time of Day: Before 9 a.m. After 6 p.m.

Trees, Flowers, Shrubs, Gardens: Any Day

Time of Day: Before 9 a.m. After 6 p.m.

Car Washing: Any Day/Any Time

Watering schedules are based on available supply and irrigation demand and are therefore subject to change.

## Attend a Board Meeting

October 13, 2009  
November 10, 2009  
December 8, 2009  
2010 Dates TBA

Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Location: CMD Office  
6250 Palmer Park Blvd

## Parks Get a Little TLC

Parks and open space are probably not the first things that come to mind when you think about Cherokee, but we have been responsible for their upkeep since 1992, when El Paso County deeded several parks and medians to the District. Since then, we have added over 20 parcels of land ranging from large and small parks to open space.

Caring for these areas is no small task and until recently, maintenance was subcontracted to a local landscaping company. This year we decided to bring on one full-time and two temporary staff members to look after our open space, and we couldn't be more excited. We now have more control over response time and

overall work quality and we think you'll agree, the results are already evident. Higher expectations for 2010 means ongoing improvements to our parks and open space.

Be sure to contact our office at 597-5080 to report any concerns, damage or vandalism so we can quickly address the issue.



Xeriscaped island on Pawnee Circle

## Fall Yard Care: On The Flipside

# Fall Yard Care



The health of your yard when spring arrives depends largely on the time and effort you invest in the fall. With colder temperatures and harsh weather on the way, there are steps you can take now to ensure a healthy and beautiful landscape in the spring. The following are tips you can use to make it happen.

## Fertilizing



If you've never considered a fall application of fertilizer now would be a good time to start, as it can yield a number of benefits for your lawn. A late season application will provide for a healthier root system and decrease the likelihood of winter kill. Plus, in the spring you'll notice an earlier green up and a denser lawn without all the extra top growth normally associated with spring fertilizer applications.

**Take Action:** Select a fertilizer rich in nitrogen and apply at least one pound per 1,000 square feet sometime between September and early November. Make sure the lawn is still green and the soil is moist so the nitrogen can dissolve and do its job. Waiting until your lawn has gone dormant or applying fertilizer to cold, dry soil will decrease the nitrogen's effectiveness.

## Mowing



Contrary to popular belief, there is no need to lower the cut height in the fall. Continue mowing at 3 - 3.5 inches until the grass stops growing.

## Irrigation



If July was any indication of winter snowfall, supplemental watering probably won't be necessary. On the other hand, extended dry spells during the fall and winter months means getting the hose out and giving your plants and lawn a drink to minimize root damage and winter kill.

**Take Action:** Water your trees, shrubs, perennials and lawn when soil and air temperatures are above 40°F. During Winter Stage (Nov – Mar) trees, shrubs and perennials may be watered any day between 10am – 3pm, and lawns can be watered twice per month depending on your address. Look for more information on Winter Stage with your October water bill.

**Don't Forget!** As freezing temperatures hit the region we receive numerous calls reporting ruptured sprinkler lines. An early October freeze can be your worst nightmare if you aren't prepared, so don't forget to winterize your irrigation system and unhook hoses from outside spigots before it's too late.

## Raking



Sunlight and air are two crucial elements to maintain healthy turf through the winter. Falling leaves and accumulated thatch – dead roots and stems – can prevent your lawn from receiving the sunlight, air and water it needs to stay healthy.

**Take Action:** Use a garden, leaf or dethatching rake to remove accumulated thatch before tree leaves begin to fall. If you want to maximize the benefit of thatch removal, be sure to check out the aeration section. As for the leaves themselves, it's generally recommended that they be removed as they fall. This will prevent an accumulated layer from forming that prevents air and sunlight from reaching the grass.

## Mulching



Much like you home's insulation protects you and your family from the winter chill, mulches insulate root systems from the harsh cold and freeze-thaw cycles.

**Take Action:** Opt for loose and airy mulches such as wood chips or coarse gravel that still allow air and water to reach the roots. Install a layer around trees, plants and shrubs.

## Aeration



This process addresses two common lawn conditions: soil compaction and thatch accumulation. Compaction occurs over time as the soil settles and is compressed through everyday use, contributing to thatch buildup. Thatch is an accumulation of dead roots and stems that collect at the turf's base above the soil surface. Both conditions limit the ability of air and water to reach the root system.

**Take Action:** Be sure to mark your sprinkler heads beforehand to prevent any damage. You can rent an aerator and do it yourself or there are a number of landscaping companies who provide this service. Manual aerators are available, but they aren't very efficient or effective. The aeration process removes 2-3 inch plugs of soil and thatch from the lawn.