



# Media Release

**To:** WA Media

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**Re:** DON'T WASTE YOUR RAIN

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The WA Turf Industry urges the general public to not waste their winter rains by applying a reputable soil wetting and moisture retaining agents to lawns and gardens now while it is raining.

In many cases across the Perth metropolitan area, soils are hydrophobic, (which means that they repel or fail to mix with water). This is due to a waxy build up on soil particles, (especially in grey sands), which in turn disallows water from penetrating the particles. The result is that the sub soil does not become wet even though there has been substantial rain. Wetting agents will aid in breaking down that waxy coating, and as a result will allow the soil to more freely absorb, disperse and hold onto water. A more even coverage of the water in your sub soils being the end optimum result.

Often if wetting agents are not applied on hydrophobic soils at the advent of the first rains, (after a long period of heat), garden plants and lawns will be forced tolerate further stress in their natural environment with surface water logging and top soil compaction. Heavy winter rains can cause lawned and gardens areas to become water logged turning them to mush as the fines and organic material comes to the surface.

This compaction inhibits the soils natural percolation process and the plants begin to stress with the lack of available oxygen. The surface area of the leaf thins so the photosynthetic process of carbon dioxide intake to turn starch into sugar for energy for growth is diminished. In short, plants stress unnecessarily.

This circumstance also makes fertiliser applications wasteful as plants which are dormant are unable to absorb nutrient through the root system while minimal leaf surface area decreases the ability to absorb foliar fertilisers through the stomata in the leaf.

“The best thing that home owners who live in sandy, hydrophobic soil areas in WA can do for their lawn and garden at the moment is to apply a quality wetting agent” said Darren Kirkwood,

Chairperson of the Turf Growers Association WA (TGAWA), “In this day and age of water concern, why would you waste your winter rains and cause plants unnecessary stress? WA sandy soils can be amongst the most hydrophobic of soils and we can combat this with the application of a quality, long lasting wetting agent.”

“The application of a good wetting agent on water logged soil, allows for the free flowing of water through the soil. In periods of good rain, wetting agents will allow the water going onto your lawn and garden to easily drain away from the topsoil instead of becoming trapped”, he said.

“These May rains have been terrific, but just because we are getting rain, doesn’t mean that our lawns and gardens are reaping the full benefit at the moment” said Becky Sellick, Board member of Turf Australia and member of the TGAWA. “The home gardener needs to be aware that we have a sizable area of land affected by hydrophobic sands here in WA. In these areas, the soil simply will not soak up our winter rains. Investing in and applying a quality wetting agent at this time of the year is just as important as it is in the hotter periods” she said, “Without the application of wetting agent you risk the chance of further stressing you plants after a long, hot summer. A quality wetting agent doesn’t cost an arm or a leg and they usually cover quite a large area; I see it as investing in your lawn and garden.”

“By keeping up the wetting agents and keeping your soil in excellent condition in your garden, you will reap the long term benefits” said Darren Kirkwood,” We all know just how beneficial our home lawns and gardens are to our well being. A small investment will provide many long term benefits and not just for your living plants.”

Remember also, to control weed growth and keep the lawn healthy during winter, regular mowing is recommended. Mow it a little higher than you would in summer at 2 to 4 week intervals, depending on the variety of your turf.

The general public can find more information at [www.tgawa.com.au](http://www.tgawa.com.au)

