



July 2010

## The Dog Days of Summer

By: Megan Deppner

With the onset of summer in Kansas, it is safe to expect much warmer temperatures that soar in to the low 100s with the heat index. What is also usually expected, though, are summer thunderstorms, and this year we have had less rain in the summer than in years past.

Starting in February of this year, temperatures stayed reasonably stable, not dropping to extremes at night when new vegetation could be damaged or killed by a sudden drop in temperature. This steady warming allowed lawns, (which are mostly fescue blend grasses that begin growing in cooler weather) to really take off in the early, mild spring. Their early growth was also helped along by steady moisture. In 2009, moisture was sporadic through the months of February and March, while 2010's moisture levels in the same months were more spread out

and totaled nearly five inches including snow-melt, compared to only 0.5 inches in 2009. This means that our lawns greened up



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quickly, responding to the warmth and moisture this year after being dormant in the winter. What happened in June of this year, though, was much different than last year, and completely opposite of our wet spring. The Wichita area has not received any significant moisture since June 13<sup>th</sup> and the temperatures of the last three weeks averaged in the mid-nineties. One year ago, though, 13 out of 30 days in June had some recorded precipi-

tation, spread out through the month. This year, there were only seven days with any kind of precipitation, and none in the last 15 days.

This does not mean, however, that we should be watering our lawns more than normal. With lawns needing no more than an inch or two of water per week, any excess water that stagnates on the lawn overnight and does not dry has the possibility of developing fungi, especially with the high humidity in Kansas. So, while lawns may begin to brown during the short drought period, there is nothing to worry about. This type of drought stress is good for the lawn, as it makes the grass send out deeper roots, making it stronger and more disease resistant in the future. By September, our lawns will once again be vibrant green if we monitor our water usage and let mother nature take care of the rest.

Questions?

Feel free to give us a call!

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