

## **WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR GRASS? WHY DOES THE WATER FLOW DOWN THE STREET?**

The turf in Keystone is now more than 30 years old. The hybrid of our original bermuda/summer grass is no longer available and is considered antiquated. Shade is the enemy of bermuda /summer grass and we have plenty of that. Bermuda/summer grass thrives on sunshine and we have plenty of trees and houses to block the sun. Age and circumstances have deteriorated some of our turf areas. Plus Keystone was not built on farm land but on the desert scabble and caliche.

The answer to a full, lush, and green grass is not always obvious. In one instance, with approval of the Board of Directors, a homeowner was allowed to remove the current grass and plant a type called St. Augustine. The homeowner reported that the removal included four layers of old sod with the plastic netting mesh. Who knew the original developer had done this?

In August 2017 two board members travelled the neighborhood with a representative from Evergreen Turf for a quick analysis. The representative noted the shade of trees and houses hampered healthy growth of the summer grass. Paradoxically it was also noted that some yards with trees had green, healthy grass and some yards with full sunshine were struggling. Again, the answer to a full, lush, and green grass is not always obvious. (The green grass in our neighborhood during the winter months is different than the bermuda/summer grass. The winter grass is called Rye and is seeded every year in late September or early October.)

Bermuda/summer grass goes dormant in the winter months and Keystone seeds yards with Rye. When the Rye dies off from increasing temperatures, the bermuda/summer grass revives. The Evergreen Turf representative also noted that the turf areas had a lot of organics - that topping that goes on top of the Rye grass to seal in required moisture and to prevent birds from pecking away all the seeds. Organics/topping is a deterrent to the bermuda /summer grass' revival! Bermuda/summer grass propagates itself by trailing out and grabbing dirt. Organics/topping doesn't allow for the bermuda/summer grass to get a good grab. Topping has been added to the Rye every year for almost three decades. (Because of this issue, we have not been adding topping for the last three years.)

For four years the Association embarked on a landscaping renovation which, in some cases, included total removal of the grass (with owner approval) and typically was replaced with granite ground cover and a boulder: Xeriscaping. While on tour with the Board members, the Evergreen Turf representative did say that the yards with xeriscaping did have more curb appeal. Keep in mind this statement was made in the heat of the summer when our bermuda/summer grass usually starts to deteriorate.

Through the years sod companies have been working on a desert specific grass that will grow in shade. Remember "Bob Sod" at the baseball park? It didn't work. Today the park has artificial turf. Evergreen has developed a sod called "Tiff Grand" but it's not perfect either. As our grass ages and deteriorates the answers aren't simple.

**The Board of Directors welcomes anyone who would like to form and join a committee to work on the issue.**