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BROWN IS BEST FOR THE WINTER TURF *Glendale Parks Staff Keep Lawns in Top Condition*

Glendale, Ariz. — Have you noticed some turf areas in the Valley are beginning to turn brown? Don't panic! Our grass and trees aren't dying – just going into dormancy.

Like a hibernating bear, brown Bermuda grass is actually going through a natural, healthy process. In fact, some experts suggest that allowing dormant grass to go brown without overseeding can lead to a better lawn the following summer.

Still, even a sleeping lawn needs care. Glendale keeps winter grass in top condition with the following methods:

- **Keep the lawn care schedule fairly normal in October (mow, fertilize, water).** As the month progresses, cut back on the irrigation schedule gradually until watering about once a week.
- **Starting now, limit watering to a half cycle, once a week through March.** Mow once a month during this time, but don't fertilize.
- **Limit activity on the dormant Bermuda grass.** The grass is weak, so bare spots can develop easily.
- **Closely watch the development of weeds.** Make sure they don't get out of control in patchy spots.
- **Eradicate dormant Bermuda from any flower beds or landscape areas.** Pulling it is much easier when it's dormant during the colder months.
- **Conserve water.**

Much like Bermuda grass, our parks' trees conserve energy and survive the winter through dormancy, a period when the tree minimizes its metabolic activity. Shorter days, cooler temperatures and reduction in sunlight stimulate dormancy in trees. During dormancy, a tree may look dead, but it's really only waiting for spring.

Winter Lawns/ ADD 1.1.1

As days get longer and the weather is warmer, the tree pulls together all of its energy for growth. When summer arrives, the tree grows rapidly, taking advantage of the long, hot days and optimal sunlight. Most trees cease producing leaves by early August. From this point until fall, the tree prepares for winter dormancy, storing food and energy for next spring's growth.

Changing conditions around the tree may alter the time of year that the tree goes into dormancy. Although heavy watering and fertilizing in September may stimulate the tree to continue growing, this is not recommended. Any new growth produced at this time of year will have little chance to prepare itself for winter, and will most likely die.

When winter sets in, dormant trees still slowly continue to grow roots, respire, and take in water and nutrients. Winter trees need care, too:

- **Prune in late fall.** Pruning prior to dormancy will help form and strengthen trees, encourage new growth in spring, and minimize storm damage.
- **Provide maintenance watering throughout the winter.** Trees don't need as much water, but will need some moisture, since our region receives little rain.

With these methods, Glendale ensures that parks will be in prime condition for the spring. For more information about Glendale's winter tree and grass maintenance routines, please visit

<http://www.glendaleaz.com/ParksandRecreation/WinterMaintenance.cfm> or call Mike Gregory at 623-930-2652.

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