

What is the water table, and how does it affect homes?

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If not properly addressed, ground water can affect an existing foundation and the ability to build successfully.

The groundwater table plays a role in home construction, foundation stability and home comfort. Because the groundwater table is so significant, it behooves homeowners to understand how it works.

National Geographic defines a water table as the boundary between water-saturated ground and unsaturated ground. Well beneath

the ground, at various depths depending on geography, topography and weather conditions, pockets of water, called aquifers, exist. The water table marks the boundary between that available water and the dry surface.

Ground water is impacted by precipitation, irrigation and ground cover. It also may be affected by land use and tides. The water table can

fluctuate with the seasons and from year to year because it is affected by climatic variations, as well as how much water may be drawn from underground, advises Encyclopedia Britannica. The water table where one person lives may be several inches or feet below the surface of the ground and follow the topography of the land. For others, it may be much higher, even

coming above the surface of the soil.

The water table as well as local soil conditions and drainage can impact homes and their foundations. If soil drains efficiently and there is a relatively low water table, it may not be problematic. However, if soil is dense and absorbent and the water table is high, the ground around a home may swell and become saturated. This can exert significant pressure against the foundation walls, states Rytech, a water damage and mold rehabilitation company.

In areas where a local water table rises near the surface, water can push against the underside of the foundation in a condition known as "hydrostatic pressure." This may cause water to infiltrate through the bottom of the foundation — even permeating solid concrete over time. If hydrostatic pressure is severe, it could lift certain portions of the foundation out of the ground, but this is very unlikely. But it could cause shifting of foundation walls and structures like fencing and decks.

Even if ground water does not cause foundation cracking or shifting, it could lead to humidity issues, resulting

in rust, bacteria and mold. Wood structures in a home may be compromised by a high level of humidity.

The home improvement resource Angie's List says certain steps may need to be taken to protect against damage from a water table and abundant ground water. Basement and foundation waterproofing professionals can help homeowners develop a plan to mitigate water damage. This can include grading changes

and the installation of drains and pumps to move water away from the house. Special paints and sealants also can protect the foundation.

Ground water can be a hindrance when it affects the home, but homeowners who learn about it can be in a position to confront any ground water issues. SH192661

How to control crabgrass before it appears

Homeowners who enjoy tending to their lawns know that grass is vulnerable to a host of problems, many of which appear at a time of year when lawn enthusiasts want to showcase the fruits of their lawn-and-garden labors.

Crabgrass is a common problem that appears in summer. According to Lowes, crabgrass plants produce thousands of seeds between midsummer and early fall. While the first frosts of late-fall or early winter kill the crabgrass plants, the seeds produced by the plants remain dormant throughout winter and then begin to grow as the ground temperature warms up with the spring and summer thaw. As a result, controlling germination, which is the development of a plant from a seed or spore after a period of dormancy, is the key to preventing crabgrass from becoming an unsightly blemish that can harm your lawn in summer.

A proactive approach to crabgrass can save homeowners the headaches of dealing with this unwanted guest taking over their grass. The following tips, courtesy of Lowes, can help homeowners reduce the likelihood of their lawns being overcome



by crabgrass as summer hits full swing.

- Recognize that routine lawn maintenance may not be enough. Even lawns that receive sufficient TLC can fall victim to crabgrass. A proactive, crabgrass-specific approach to lawn maintenance is the most effective way to control the problem before it pops up.

- Apply a pre-emergent herbicide. Pre-emergent herbicides kill crabgrass seedlings as they germinate. While these herbicides are highly effective, they must be applied at precisely the right time. The right time to apply them depends on weather patterns. For example, Lowes notes that homeowners who live in regions that might have experienced warmer than usual winters will probably need to apply the herbicides earlier than usual. While the manufacturer instructions should always be followed when applying herbicides, it's essential that homeowners take weather patterns into consideration as well.

- Wait until the ground temperature rises above 60 F. Applying herbicides when the

ground temperature is below 60 F might render the products ineffective. Gauging soil temperature can be tricky, but Lowes advises monitoring shrubs and trees on the property. Once shrubs begin to bloom and trees bud, herbicide can be applied.

- Wait when treating newly seeded lawns. Pre-emergent herbicides might kill new grass seedlings, so homeowners with newly seeded lawns should wait until they have mowed their lawns three times before applying a herbicide.

- Emphasize uniform application. If a herbicide is not applied uniformly across the lawn, crabgrass can establish itself and ultimately spread to the rest of the lawn.
- Do not thatch or aerate after applying a herbicide. Thatching or aerating a lawn after applying a herbicide might break the product's chemical barrier, thereby rendering it ineffective.

Crabgrass can quickly spread on an untreated lawn. A proactive approach that prevents its growth can keep lawns looking great through summer. GT194807



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