

OUTSIDE WATER CONSERVATION IDEAS

1. Water the lawn for longer periods but less frequently.

This saves time spent on frequent watering and saves money otherwise spent treating lawn diseases caused by over-watering. Watering lawns less often but for a longer period encourages the grass to grow longer roots, which makes the lawn more drought resistant. The general rule is to water long enough for the water to penetrate the ground about 4-6 inches once a week. The sprinkler should distribute water evenly and only where it is needed.

2. Water in the evening or early morning and when the wind is not blowing.

This reduces evaporation.

3. Remove thatch and weeds.

This allows water and air to reach the roots of the grass. Poking holes in the soil (aeration) also allows the roots to get water.

4. Water shrubs and plants separately from the lawn.

Plants have different needs than lawns and may be over watered if watered at the same time as lawns.

5. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it.

6. Buy garden hose nozzle adapters.

Nozzle adapters that shut off the flow of water when the hose is not in use can save water and reduce trips to the faucet. The best adapters will not leak even though water is flowing through the hose.

7. Use low water using native and ornamental plants in landscaping.

Consult with the nursery owners, libraries, landscapers and garden clubs for the names of suitable plants. Some native and low water plants require less fertilizer and maintenance than lawns and non-native plants.

8. Use mulches to cover the ground around plants.

This will help keep moisture in the ground and will help keep weeds down. Weeds compete with desirable plants for water.

9. Consider changing to a drip irrigation watering system for non-turf areas.

Soaker hoses or underground sprinkler systems are better than applying water directly to the root zone. Direct application to the root zone improves efficiency and is healthier for some plants.

10. Wash cars and outside windows with a bucket.

Using a bucket of soapy water for the wash and a bucket of clean water for the rinse will drastically reduce water use compared to using a hose to wet, wash, and rinse.

11. "Dry Clean" sidewalks and driveways.

Sweeping sidewalks and driveways instead of hosing them down is a big water saver.

12. Clean gutters and downspouts by hand instead of using water.

13. Replace leaky or broken sprinklers and sprinkler heads promptly.