

Watering Tips

Watering efficiently is one of the best and easiest ways to save water—and money. Besides conserving water, proper watering will also keep your landscape plants healthy and beautiful throughout the year. A water-wise landscape doesn't mean giving up your lawn or making dramatic changes to your landscape or lifestyle. There are many simple ways to save water, and they all start with you.

There are three steps to practical landscape watering:

Find out how much water your plants need.

Know how much water each part of your watering system applies.

Match your watering system output to your plants' needs.

(Would be ideal to have a call-out to who to contact for help determining the items listed above – a partner or yard care expert perhaps).

Group like plants together for watering efficiency

To reduce watering and maintenance, group plants with greater water needs together, and place them in a spot that is naturally moist, such as a low-lying area or at the bottom of a hill. Keeping plants with similar needs together allows you to provide just enough water to keep them healthy. Whether you're irrigating by hand or using an automatic timer, grouping like with like can simplify your watering sequence.

There are zones that don't need any watering, such as driveways, decks, patios, rock gardens, or pathways.

When is the best time to water?

Avoid afternoon watering, which results in a 20 to 25 percent loss of water through heat and evaporation. Watering in the evening prevents evaporation, but it increases the risk of fungal disease and damage from nocturnal insects searching for water. Do not sprinkle foliage in the evening. Wet foliage overnight may encourage disease.

Morning watering is preferred. Avoid watering during the heat of the day, as water will be lost to evaporation. Apply water at a rate of half an inch per hour. Faster application will cause runoff, wasting water and money. Test the application rate for a sprinkler by placing small cans at within the sprinkler's reach, and checking the level of water in them at 15-minute intervals.

Sprinkler Systems: Are you overwatering your yard?

Many plant problems arise not from underwatering, but from overwatering. A good way to prevent overwatering is to install rain or soil moisture sensors to override your automatic watering system when necessary.

If you choose an automatic sprinkler system, make sure you set it correctly and adjust it as conditions change. Water early in the morning to reduce the evaporation rate. If water runs off your yard, split your watering times into two or more sessions. And be sure to turn off your system if you're getting enough water from rain showers.

The advantage of hand watering is that you can easily avoid overwatering. Use a nozzle to control the flow. When water stops being absorbed into the ground, move to another location. Wait an hour, then plunge a long screwdriver or spade into the ground to check that the soil is moist to a depth of six to ten inches.