

Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

Automatic irrigation systems save time and water - An automatic sprinkler system can be set to water the lawn for a specified amount of time. This saves your time and waters the lawn evenly. If you don't have an automatic sprinkling system, use a kitchen timer.

Don't water during the day as this increases evaporation loss - Try to water at night, or at sundown or sunrise to reduce the amount of water that evaporates before soaking into the soil.

Don't water the pavement - Position sprinklers so that water lands on the lawn or garden, not in areas where it is not needed. Also avoid watering when it is windy. Wind causes water to evaporate quickly and blows water onto areas where it is not needed. Remember, if it doesn't grow, don't water it!

Water without waste - Interrupt watering when puddles or runoff occurs. Allow the water to penetrate into the soil before resuming irrigation. After walking on your grass, look to see if the blades bounce back. If so, it has enough moisture.

Plant drought resistant trees and plants - Landscape with plants that require less water. These plants can be very attractive and can survive drought better than turf. Rocks, gravel, benches, and deck areas can all be used to creatively decorate the yard. The City Environmental Lab can provide advice on water saving gardening. Call 303-384-8181 or visit the Xeriscape garden at the City Water Plant, 1445 10th Street.

Consider drip irrigation systems around trees and shrubs - Drip systems permit water to flow slowly to roots, encouraging strong root systems. These systems also cut down evaporation.

Keep lawn free of weeds - Weeds are water thieves and will rob your plants of water and nutrients. Spot spray or remove weeds as they appear.

Match fertilizer to the plant requirement - Fertilizer applications require additional water. Excess fertilizer stimulates top growth, often to the detriment of the root system. Skip the fertilizer in drought years, your lawn won't be quite as green, but you will develop a better root system, and save water.

Mow as infrequently as possible and cut your lawn higher than normal - Mowing puts the grass under additional stress that requires more water. Longer leaf surfaces promote deeper rooting and shade the root zone. Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade in one mowing. Return mulched clippings to the lawn.

Use a broom to clean the driveway and sidewalk - Sweeping the driveway and sidewalk will get them clean enough without wasting gallons of water.

Divert your down spouts – Direct rain water from down spouts into lawn and garden areas where possible, instead of allowing this water to run down the driveway and into the street.

Wash your car at a commercial car wash rather than in your driveway – A commercial car wash uses less water and you won't be contributing pollutants like soap, heavy metals and sediment to our local waterways.

Don't use the sprinklers just to cool off or for play - Running through water from a hose or sprinkler is fun but wastes gallons of water.

Spot water - Drier areas require more water than areas where water settles. If necessary, water dry areas by hand.