

# Tips for Conserving Water Outdoors

- Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- Avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
- Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps.
- Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower.
- Check your water meter and bill to track your water usage.
- Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.
- Use a layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save 80 gallons of water every time.
- Divide your watering cycle into shorter periods to reduce runoff and allow for better absorption every time you water.
- We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.
- Only water your lawn when needed. You can tell this by simply walking across your lawn. If you leave footprints, it's time to water.
- Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer grass shades root systems and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.
- Use the sprinkler for larger areas of grass. Water small patches by hand to avoid waste.
- Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect and use for your garden.
- Install a rain shut-off device on your automatic sprinklers to eliminate unnecessary watering.

- Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed.
- Remember to check your sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the heads in good shape.
- Don't water your lawn on windy days. After all, sidewalks and driveways don't need water.
- Water your plants deeply but less frequently to create healthier and stronger landscapes.
- Make sure you know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save gallons of water and damage to your home if a pipe were to burst.
- Group plants with the same watering needs together to get the most out of your watering time.
- Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light, and water.
- While fertilizers promote plant growth, they also increase water consumption. Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer needed.
- Avoid installing ornamental water features and fountains that spray water into the air. Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation.
- Buy a rain gauge to track how much rain or irrigation your yard receives. Check with your local water agency to see how much rain is needed to skip an irrigation cycle.
- Teach your family how to shut off your automatic watering systems. Turn sprinklers off if the system is malfunctioning or when a storm is approaching.
- Set a kitchen timer when watering your lawn or garden with a hose.
- Avoid overseeding your lawn with winter grass. Once established, ryegrass needs water every three to five days, whereas dormant Bermuda grass needs water only once a month.
- When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.

- Make sure your swimming pools, fountains, and ponds are equipped with recirculating pumps.
- Landscape with Xeriscape trees, plants and groundcovers. Call your local conservation office for more information about these water thrifty plants.
- Use a hose nozzle and turn off the water while you wash your car and save more than 100 gallons.
- Bermuda grasses are dormant (brown) in the winter and will only require water once every three to four weeks or less if it rains.
- Use sprinklers that throw big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller drops of water and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground.
- More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering. Be sure only to water plants when necessary.
- Adjust your watering schedule each month to match seasonal weather conditions and landscape requirements.
- Water only as rapidly as the soil can absorb the water.
- Aerate your lawn. Punch holes in your lawn about six inches apart so water will reach the roots rather than run off the surface.