

Saving Water outside the home

We can all do our part to lessen the effects of limited water supplies this summer. We can start by conserving the water we use today. Here you will find helpful and common tips for saving water outside your home.

Adjust sprinklers & water when it's cool

Sprinklers should water your lawn and garden, not the street or sidewalk. Most automatic irrigation timers are set to go off in the early morning (5:00 am – 7:00 am); therefore, utilities must often super-size their facilities to meet early morning demands. Setting irrigation timers at other times of the morning or night (11:00 pm – 5:00 am), when temperatures are cooler, helps minimize evaporation and shave peak water usage.

Inspect your irrigation system

Look for leaks, broken lines, or blockage in the lines. A well maintained system will save you money, time, and water. Even little things like a shut-off nozzle for your garden hose can save you about 5 – 7 gallons each minute.

Water established lawns about 1 inch per week

You may need slightly more during hot, dry weather. Some water providers will use a “*weekly watering number*” that is based on local weather conditions to help customers determine exactly how much water their gardens and landscapes need each week.

Adjust your watering schedule

Whether you have a manual or automatic system, be sure to adjust your watering schedule throughout the irrigation season. Adjusting the amount of water used to match weather conditions (watering more when it is hot and dry, less when it is cooler and wet) helps you water your landscape more efficiently.

Apply the amount of water your soil can absorb

Water thoroughly, but infrequently. If runoff or puddling occurs, break longer watering sessions into several short sessions allowing water to soak into the soil between each session.

Consider using water-saving technology

Weather-based irrigation controllers, which act as a thermostat for your sprinkler system, use local weather data to determine when and how much water to use. Soil moisture sensors water plants based on their needs by measuring the amount of moisture in the soil and tailoring the irrigation schedule accordingly. Rainfall shutoff devices and rain sensors help decrease water wasted in the landscape by turning off the irrigation system when it is raining.





☑ Adjust your mower to a higher setting

A taller lawn provides shade to the roots and helps retain soil moisture, so your lawn needs less water.

☑ Aerate your soil

Soil can become compacted during home construction or from normal foot traffic. Aerating your soil with a simple lawn aerator can increase the infiltration of water into the ground, improving water flow to the root zone and reducing water runoff.

☑ Replace lawns

Consider replacing some lawn areas with low water use plants and ornamental grasses. They are easier to maintain than turf, don't need as much water, and look beautiful. Seek out native plants that are appropriate to your local climate and soil conditions. Once established, these plants require little water beyond normal rainfall, are very low maintenance, require little to no pesticides or fertilizer, and are more resistant to pests and diseases than are other species.

☑ Use mulch around shrubs & garden plants

Doing so helps reduce evaporation, inhibit weed growth, moderate soil temperature, and prevent erosion. Types of mulch include bark chips, grass clippings, straw, leaves, stones, and brick chips. Leave a few inches of space between trunks of woody plants and organic mulches to prevent rot.

☑ Group plants together

Creating a garden with "watering zones" allows you to give each plant the water it requires – not too much, not too little.

☑ Minimize or eliminate fertilizer

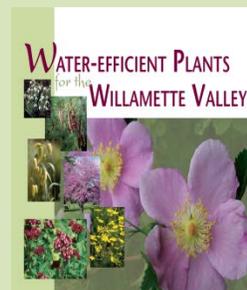
Fertilizer encourages thirsty new growth, causing your landscape to require additional water. Minimize or eliminate the use of fertilizer where possible. If you do need fertilizer, look for a product that contains "natural organic" or "slow-release" ingredients. These fertilizers feed plants slowly and evenly, helping to create healthier plants with strong root systems and no excessive "top growth." Moreover, using "slow-release" fertilizers can reduce nutrient run-off into ground and surface waters, protecting natural resources.

☑ Use a broom and a bucket

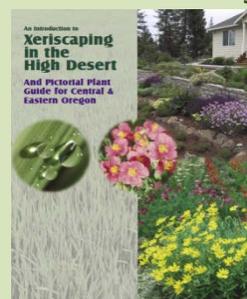
Sweep patios, sidewalks and driveways clean with a broom, instead of using a hose. Instead of using a running hose, fill a bucket with water to wash your car. A hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle would also work.

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