

Outdoor Conservation Tips



Landscape

- ◆ Check your sprinklers regularly to be sure that only landscape is being watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.
- ◆ Plant during spring or fall and choose drought tolerant plants. This could save up to 550 gallons yearly per plant.
- ◆ Apply a heavy layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.
- ◆ Minimize evaporation by watering in the early morning hours, before sun is up and winds are lighter



- ◆ Divide your watering cycle into shorter periods to reduce runoff and allow absorption of water
- ◆ Aerate soil by punching or drilling small holes to help with water absorption
- ◆ Check outdoor faucets, pipes and hoses for leaks.
- ◆ Adjust lawn mower to a higher setting. Higher grass shades root systems and holds soil moisture.



- ◆ Hand water with a hose or install drip irrigation in small patches of grass and landscape. Sprinklers tend to overwater and are less efficient.
- ◆ Use porous materials for walkways and patios to prevent wasteful runoff.
- ◆ Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect to use for gardens.
- ◆ Water your summer lawns no more than once every 3 days.
- ◆ Install a smart sense water controller or a rain shut off device on your automatic sprinklers to eliminate unnecessary watering.
- ◆ Eliminate or reduce the amount of grass by planting drought tolerant, native plants instead.
- ◆ Periodically check sprinkler valves, lines and heads for leak and to be sure they are efficiently spraying the areas needed.
- ◆ Don't water on windy days, sidewalks and gutters do not need to be watered.
- ◆ Know your plants and their specific water needs to be sure not to overwater.
- ◆ Group plants with similar water needs together for efficiency
- ◆ Be sure to know where your water shut-off valve is. This could save thousands of gallons of water and damage to your home if a pipe should burst.

- ◆ Try to avoid planting on steep slopes; tiered boxes are a great solution. Use a soaker hose if watering on slopes to reduce runoff.
- ◆ Group plants with similar watering needs together to get the most out of your watering time.
- ◆ Weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for water, nutrients and light.
- ◆ Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer to plants. Nitrogen rich fertilizers increase water consumption.
- ◆ Set a kitchen timer when watering your lawn or garden with a hose.
- ◆ Seed lawns with a drought tolerant grass. Dormant Bermuda grass needs water only once a month.
- ◆ Use a moisture meter to test soil moisture before watering. If you cannot purchase one, try inserting a screwdriver into the soil. If it goes in easily, wait to water. If soil is hard, it's time to water.
- ◆ Landscape with xeriscape trees, plants and groundcovers. Ask your local nursery for more information about this type of water saving landscape.
- ◆ Start a compost pile. Using compost when you plant adds water-holding organic matter to the soil.
- ◆ 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 under-watering. Be sure to only water plants when necessary.
- ◆ Water only as rapidly as the soil can absorb the water. Several small increments allow the soil to absorb the water.
- ◆ Aerate your lawn. Punch holes in your lawn about six inches apart so that water will reach the roots rather than run off the surface.
- ◆ Place water collecting cans in your lawn to catch and measure the water output of your sprinklers. Call 467-5724 to get free collecting cans.
- ◆ Use porous material for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff.

Pools and spas



- ◆ Install covers on pools and spas. This will reduce evaporation by 98%.
- ◆ Check for leaks around pumps and have pools sealed and checked for cracks regularly.
- ◆ Use a grease pencil to mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later. Your pool should not lose more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch a day.
- ◆ Make sure swimming pools, spas, and fountains are equipped with recirculating pumps.

- ◆ When backwashing your pool, consider using the water on your landscape.

Around The House

- ◆ Check your water meter and bill to track your water usage
- ◆ Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save 80 gallons of water each time.



- ◆ Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- ◆ Teach your family how to shut off your automatic watering systems. Turn sprinklers off if system is malfunctioning or a storm is approaching.
- ◆ Instead of running sprinklers for children to play in during the heat of the day, buy a small plastic pool. When the water needs changing, use it to water landscape



- ◆ Winterize outdoor spigots when temps drop to 20 degrees F to prevent pipes from bursting or freezing.
- ◆ Insulate hot water pipes so that you don't have to run as much water to get hot water to the faucet.
- ◆ Wash your car on the grass. This will water your lawn at the same time.
- ◆ If you have an evaporative cooler, direct the drain water to a flowerbed, tree or your lawn.
- ◆ Bathe your pets outdoor in an area in need of water.



- ◆ Report broken pipes and errant sprinklers to your land owner or plumber immediately. The city requires that leaking plumbing be fixed within 5 days. If you witness leaky hydrants, or park sprinklers, call 467-5724.