

◆ Check sprinkler and irrigation systems and timing devices regularly to be sure they operate properly, and replace or repair faulty parts promptly.

◆ Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose which can be adjusted down to a fine spray, so that water flows only as needed. When finished, turn it off at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks. Check the hose connectors to make sure plastic or rubber washers are in place...and doing their job.



◆ Use a broom or blower instead of a hose to clean leaves and debris off patios, driveways and sidewalks.

◆ Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. A garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours. Use some kind of timer to remind yourself to turn sprinklers off.

◆ Avoid purchasing recreational water toys which require a constant stream of water. If youngsters are allowed to play in the sprinklers, be sure it is during a lawn watering, otherwise this sprinkler usage will waste at least 10 gallons a minute!

◆ If you're going to install an ornamental water feature, make sure it recycles the water.



*According to the Texas
Water Development Board,
during the summer --
when 50 to 80 percent of our
water consumption is used
outside -- we may waste
as much as half of the
water we use!*



Lone Star Groundwater
Conservation District

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www.lonestargcd.org

*The water we
conserve today
can serve us
tomorrow.*



San Jacinto River Authority

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*Learn to
Use Water
Wisely...*

*Yard and
Garden*



We have always taken our water resources for granted, but now that we are making the transition to surface water in compliance with the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District's mandates to reduce our dependence on groundwater, people are becoming more interested in using water more efficiently to control costs, too.

When and how we use water in the yard and garden can make a tremendous difference in how much is used. For example, if you water your yard only when it needs it, you could save between 750 and 1,500 gallons of water a month.

Here are some simple tips to help you put a realistic, cost-effective water efficiency plan into effect outside your home.

- ◆ Use native plants and shrubs

whenever possible in landscaping your yard. They tend to be more drought tolerant, require watering less frequently, and are often low maintenance, too.

- ◆ Different varieties of grasses, plants and soils use different amounts of water. When original landscape planning is an option, "zone" plants according to their water requirements. Experts suggest that grass be watered separately from flower beds and landscaped areas.

- ◆ In our area, St. Augustine grass has a high "thirst" requirement. When possible, consider converting some of the grassy areas in your yard to native plant zones.



- ◆ As a general rule, proper watering for most Texas lawns means applying 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week during the growing season. To figure out how long you'll need to run your sprinkler, place at least three 1 inch deep cans (e.g., empty cat food or tuna cans) throughout the area the sprinkler covers. Water the length of time you think is correct. Each can should have the same amount of water. If there's less than an inch of water in the cans, you need to water longer. If the cans have an uneven amount of water, the distribution of the sprinkler needs adjustment. The

goal is to apply enough water to wet the soil to a depth of 4-6 inches.

- ◆ Avoid cutting the grass too short. Longer blades of grass will reduce evaporation and root stress since shaded soil will not dry out as quickly. Also, be sure to control any insects that attack your lawn -- quickly and completely.

- ◆ Apply fertilizer sparingly to develop the root system and to help keep the lawn healthy. Too much fertilizer, however, will lead to excessive growth...which will then require more watering. Many experts recommend leaving the grass clippings on the lawn, which will minimize the need for additional fertilizer.

- ◆ Stormwater runoff can carry fertilizer directly to streams and rivers, where it can seriously harm water quality. Take care to keep any fertilizer you use on the grass and not on concrete driveways or streets.



- ◆ Water lawns in the early morning hours when evaporation loss will be less. Early

morning waterings are better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

- ◆ Use a sprinkler that emits large drops of water that remain close to the ground instead of one that sprays a fine mist into the air. Don't water on windy days; this can waste up to 300 gallons in just one watering! Set the sprinkler so that the lawn is watered...not sidewalks and driveways.

- ◆ If you have a sprinkler system, add a rain sensor. There's no point in wasting water if Mother Nature has watered the lawn for you.

- ◆ Raising the lawn mower blades just one notch higher can save between 500 and 1,500 gallons a month.

- ◆ For any small areas of grass, consider using a hose to water by hand to keep waste to a minimum.

- ◆ Use plenty of mulch in the planting areas. Not only does this provide a nice, "manicured" look, but the mulch helps keep the ground from overheating, holds moisture that would otherwise evaporate, and helps to discourage weed growth. A good mulch layer can save up to 1,500 gallons of water a month.

- ◆ Use the kind of watering equipment to suit your "target." Use sprinklers for the lawn areas, and soaker hoses or drip irrigation systems for trees, shrubs, and flower beds.

- ◆ Use drip or trickle irrigation -- the slow, frequent application of small amounts of water to the soil area directly surrounding the plant roots -- to take care of gardens and landscaped areas. Drip irrigation can save up to 60 percent of water delivered by other systems.