

HOW TO SAVE WATER IN YOUR GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE



Did you know that you can save 20 to 50 percent of the water you currently use in your garden and landscape and actually improve your plants health?

Many people think to save water they need to replace their current landscape with strictly “drought tolerant” plants, perhaps removing their lawn altogether. While drought tolerant landscapes and lawn removal could be useful options, they are just two of the many strategies that can be employed to reduce water use.

Remember that trees provide beauty, shade, cooling, privacy, and oxygen. They can also significantly increase property value. Even when water is in short supply, taking care of your trees should be a high priority.

TRY THESE WATER-WISE TIPS:

- When selecting plants consider their climate suitability for the site.
- Check your sprinkler system for leaks and make necessary repairs.
- Water early in the morning.
- Avoid watering during windy times of the day to reduce water waste.
- Control weeds which compete for water, light and nutrients.
- Fertilize moderately (the low end of recommended rates) to avoid excessive growth, which increases water needs.

- Apply 3 to 4 inches of mulch around trees and other woody plants. Mulches reduce evaporation from soil, lower soil temperatures, and reduce weeds. Use backyard compost, decomposed lawn clippings, bark, composted manure, or other bagged products.

- Reduce runoff on slopes by cycling water in short intervals. Apply water only until runoff begins. Wait an equal amount of time then repeat watering until runoff begins again. Repeat until soil is moistened to one foot depth.

- Prune trees and other woody plants only when necessary. Pruning stimulates shoot growth, which increases water needs.

- Water trees and other woody plants separately from the lawn, since it is best to water them less frequently but more deeply.

- Water trees and other woody plants to a depth of two feet to help promote a deep root system. You can use a soil probe, screwdriver, auger, or straightened coat hanger to find out how deep the water reached.

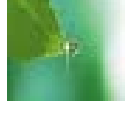
- Consider installing a drip system that applies water through emitters directly to the root zone where it is needed most and not wasted.

- The type of soil you have largely determines how often you should water: Clay soils may only need to be watered once during a given period while sandy soils may need two or three waterings during the same time.

Add organic soil amendments to sandy soils and thoroughly mix them into the upper foot. This can increase the water-holding capacity of the soil and the interval between waterings.

- Aerate lawns and ground around trees and other plants. Many local rental businesses can provide soil aerators.
- Remove the accumulation of old grass roots, stem, and leaves, called thatch, on your lawn. Thatch acts as a barrier to keep water out of the soil.
- Check faucets, hoses, and sprinklers for leaks. A new rubber washer is inexpensive and easy to install.
- Mow your lawn at the correct height: Common Bermuda grass, 1 inch; Tall Fescue 1 ½ - 3 inches; Perennial Ryegrass and Kentucky Bluegrass 1 ½ inches.
- Consider replacing turf with low-water use plants.
- Reduce the size of your lawn.
- Turn off sprinklers when run-off starts.
- To determine the best irrigation schedule for your lawn visit the lawn watering guide at: <http://cecolusa.ucdavis.edu>

For answers to gardening questions contact the Colusa County Master Gardener Hot Line: 530-458-0570 or 530-458-5130





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COMMON SPRINKLER PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM

Broken sprinkler

Uneven distribution

Sunken or blocked sprinklers

Crooked sprinklers

Grass preventing sprinkler from functioning

Debris plugging

Spraying in wrong direction

Ask your garden center professional for additional information or assistance about how to save water in your garden and landscape.

SOLUTION

Replace with a sprinkler.

Replace with matched sprinklers

Raise or replace the risers; remove vegetation blocking the water.

Straighten

Mow or chemically remove grass from around sprinkler.

Flush out sprinklers to remove debris.

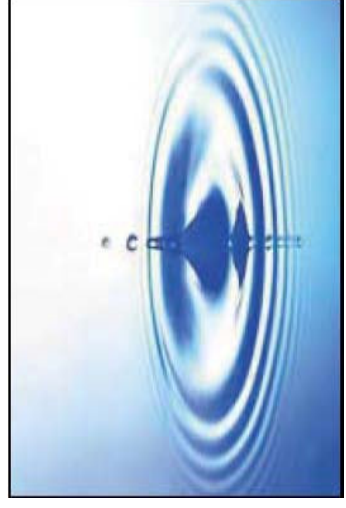
Realign sprinkler



GARDEN INFORMATION

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In Your Garden and Landscape



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