Irrigation & Landscaping

Guideline 7

Did you know: Gardening professionals agree that most lawns and yards receive more water than they need. Over-watering creates run-off that carries toxic fertilizers and pesticides into our streams. This is not only harmful to wildlife and your plants, it wastes water and money too! The following tips will help protect the environment, keep your yard healthy, and save you money on your water bill.

General

1. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it.
2. Water in the evening or early morning when evaporation is least likely to occur. Drip irrigation may be used during the day with little water lost from evaporation. Do not water when it is windy.
3. Water only once a week. Weekly watering should be sufficient. Water less often if your plants need less moisture (see Guideline 3 - Lawn Watering).

Irrigation and Sprinklers

1. When landscaping, a properly designed and installed irrigation system should be included as a water conservation tool. Automated irrigation systems offer the ultimate in both control and distribution of water over other watering systems.
2. Keep your sprinkler system in good repair. Fix leaks and adjust the sprinkler heads to eliminate over-spray onto paved areas or buildings. Investigate any source of unusual runoff or puddling.

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3. Turn off your sprinkler system at the first sign of saturation or runoff to allow the water to soak in. Water again in an hour or two if needed.

4. Make sure the controller of your automated sprinkler system is properly set to achieve minimum watering levels.

Landscaping

1. Consider alternate landscaping practices. Reduce turf area or use groundcovers and/or mulches instead of turf. Generally, groundcovers use less water than turf areas.
2. Use low water using turf varieties. Consult your county extension office or local nursery to identify low water using turf varieties for your area.
3. Aerate to reduce thatch (dead grass) buildup in turf areas in spring or fall. Thatch restricts penetration of water, air, and nutrients. Aeration will also increase water penetration in compacted soils.
4. Consider using organic fertilizer. Consult a nursery or landscape professional for a well-balanced fertilizer program.
5. Spot spray weeds as needed and consider an integrated pest management program to control bugs and/or disease.
6. Use mulches such as bark compost to help planting beds retain moisture.
7. Consider water consumption when selecting plants. Some plants use more water than others. Consult a good gardening book or your local nursery to determine which low water using plants are correct for your area.
8. Plant placement is important. Remember, right plant, right place! Shade loving plants don't do well if placed in the sun and will require excessive watering to survive. Place plants with similar water needs in common areas so all can benefit from the same application of water.

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