

USING WATER EFFICIENTLY OUTDOORS

During the summer, about 40 percent of water consumed is used outdoors, mostly for lawns and gardens. Many gardens and lawns can withstand less frequent watering. In fact, applying only the amount of water





really needed helps strengthen the root systems of lawns, trees and plants.

Water efficient lawns and gardens also save water and money, lessen the amount of required maintenance and still result in beautiful landscaping.

KNOW WHEN TO WATER

- Stroll around your garden to check for signs of water deficiency, such as drooping or falling leaves and lack of new growth or vigor.
- Test the soil on the surface and in the root zones of plants. Push a screwdriver into the soil, dig a small hole, or use a soil-core sampler or moisture probe to determine if the soil is moist near the plant roots.
- Use a rain gauge to measure rainfall and compare it to plant needs. Supplement the rain with irrigation when necessary.
- Plant a "signal" plant—one that needs water slightly more often than other plants in the area. When this plant shows signs of stress, water all the plants.
- You can tell when it's time to water a lawn because your grass won't spring back when you step on it. If it springs back, don't water.

FOUR WATER-EFFICIENT IRRIGATION METHODS

	Perforated Hose	Fan Sprinkler	Pop-Up Fixed Spray	Drip Irrigation
Method				
Advantage	Excellent for newly seeded and irregularly shaped areas. Slow discharge rate reduces runoff. Low cost.	Soft spray useful for delicate flowers and ground covers. Accurate, single direction aim.	Excellent for lawn and ground covers. Little water lost to evaporation. Buried raisers assist mowing.	Little evaporation or runoff. Excellent for new plants and slopes. Can be buried under mulch. Easy to install.
Disadv.	Fine spray blows and evaporates easily. Water pattern may be uneven.	If used at high pressure, misting and evaporation occurs. May cause runoff.	May cause runoff. Need 1 head per 10 feet. Difficult to rearrange planting area.	Requires pressure-reducer and strainer on supply line. Hard to observe operation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Port Townsend Water Quality
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Port Townsend, WA 98368
(360) 379-5001



BROCHURES IN THIS SERIES

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Making the most of a limited resource

a customer's
guide to
efficient use
of water. . .

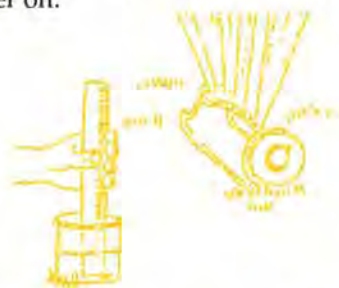
Outdoors



Port Townsend Public Works

LAWNS

- Reduce the size of your lawn. The average lawn can consume as much as 1,000 to 3,000 gallons during a peak summer day.
- Accept a less than lush lawn. Grass will go dormant, but recover readily when water becomes available. Reduce traffic on these areas if possible.
- Water early in the morning before 10 a.m. It's less windy and you can better control the water distribution. Watering in the heat of the day allows the water to evaporate and watering late in the afternoon or evening may promote fungus and other lawn diseases.
- In Western Washington, lawns require about 1 inch of water every 7 days. Set a can or cake pan on the lawn when you water and measure the water accumulated in the can. Keep track of how long it takes for 1 inch of water to come from your sprinkler. Use this time as a guide for leaving the sprinkler on.



- When planting lawn, avoid blue grass. Instead use fescues, ryes, and buffalo grass.
- Watering the sidewalk, driveway and street do your lawn no good. An average lawn sprinkler will use about 600 gallons of water an hour. That's enough water to fill 20 bathtubs! So make sure you put the water where it will do the most good—on the lawn and garden.

PLANTS

- Buy plants that are low water users. A nursery will be able to advise you, or you can obtain a list of low-water use plants from the county Cooperative Extension office.
- Consider replacing lawn with ground covers such as junipers, heathers, mugho pines, and kinnikinnik.
- Plant placement is important. Shade-loving plants will not do well if placed in full sun and will require excessive watering to survive. Place plants with similar water needs in common areas so they can all benefit from the same application of water.
- Use mulches—such as woven weed barrier, bark, sawdust or compost—around trees, shrubs, bedding plants and vegetables to cut down on evaporation and weeding.



- Prioritize water use. Give mature trees top priority for a weekly watering during water shortages.

GARDENS

- For gardens and shrubs, use drip irrigation. A drip system can result in a 60 percent water savings since water is applied directly to the root zone. Turning a soaker hose upside down is a good temporary drip irrigation system. Hand-held spraying does not provide deep root watering and should be avoided.



- Eliminate weeds. They compete with vegetables and other plants for water.
- Group vegetables requiring more water together in the garden. Place plants closer together to reduce weeds and provide shade for roots.
- Arrange a group of 3 to 4 transplants around a perforated 3-lb. coffee can inserted into the soil up to the rim. Water can be applied in the can which will slowly irrigate and feed surrounding plants.
- Train your plants to expect less water in the spring. Encourage strong deep root growth by letting plants dry out and then watering generously with a slow trickle hose to the roots. Thoroughly soak soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches when watering. Use a screwdriver or moisture probe to check depth of soil moisture.

OUTDOORS

- Wash your car on the lawn. Use a bucket and sponge for washing and a shut-off nozzle on your garden hose. Leaving a garden hose running for 20 minutes will use 100 gallons of water.
- Wash your car less often. Keep it waxed for easy washing.
- Use a broom, not a hose, when cleaning driveways and walkways.
- Collect runoff from roofs and paved areas for garden use.
- Use water efficiently when children play with hoses and sprinklers. Keep them on the lawn area and play when the lawn requires watering.
- Check hoses for leaks and replace washers in hose connectors. Leaks will cost you money and distribute water unevenly.
- Invest in timing devices for sprinklers and water-efficient irrigation systems such as drip irrigation and soaker hoses.

