

Water Conservation

Water Conservation Outdoors

Avoid Over Watering. Daily watering keeps the pores in your soil filled with water instead of oxygen, which is vital to plant growth. Without oxygen, the roots of the sod will suffocate and die, leaving the lawn with a very shallow root system. This requires the necessity for more frequent fertilizing and watering causing the lawn to become anemic. The weakened root system also creates an environment for more invasive weed growth. The proper way to water a lawn is very simple: thoroughly but infrequently. When the soil is dry to a depth of five inches, water the lawn long enough to wet the soil five inches deep.

Watch your grass — it has some distinct ways of letting you know it is thirsty. Areas of grass may begin to change color, picking up a blue-green or smoky tinge. Grass will not spring back up after being stepped on, and faint footprints will remain. Allow nature to water your lawn by delaying the activation of your system as late into the spring as possible. Check to see if rainfall is quenching your lawn's thirst. Hand water or use a sprinkler to water dry spots rather than water the whole yard.

Water during the cool part of the day. Water loss to evaporation can be as much as 20-25%! Avoid times of high winds which can reduce efficiency. Water droplets clinging to grass can actually cause the sun to "burn" individual blades. Water early in the morning. Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

Deep soak your lawn. Water your lawn just long enough for water to seep down to the roots where it won't evaporate quickly and where it will do the most good. A light sprinkling, which sits on the surface, will simply evaporate and be wasted. A slow, steady fall of water is the best way to irrigate your lawn.

Keep your spray pattern low and slow. Fine mist or fog sprays are more likely to lose water to drifting and evaporation than coarse sprays. Water sprayed low is less subject to wind disturbance and therefore, more likely to land where you've planned.

Don't water the gutter. Position your sprinklers so water lands on your lawn or garden, not on concrete where it does no good.

Customize your sprinkler system for your landscape. Observe and alter watering times for each section of your yard depending on exposure, shade and sprinkler output. Develop a separate watering schedule for turf, trees, shrubs and flower beds. Most trees and shrubs don't like to be watered as often as turf or annual flowers. Use a drip irrigation system to water trees, shrubs and flower beds.

Install a rain sensor that will override your sprinkler system controller and shut the system off during rain.

Raise your mower height. The height of your grass is directly proportional to the depth of the roots, so encourage roots to grow deeper by cutting grass at a height of 3 inches. Also, grass blades will actually shade each other and the soil to help the turf to retain moisture.

Aerate your lawn every spring and fall to reduce soil compaction. This will help prevent runoff and supply oxygen to the roots.

Plant drought resistant trees and plants. Xeriscape is the use of native and climate-adapted plants in landscape. There are many beautiful trees and plants that thrive in the Carbondale area with far less watering than other species.

Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. A layer of mulch will slow the evaporation of moisture.

Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets, and couplings.

Your efforts matter! More water conservation tips are listed on the American Water Works Association and Water Saver websites.