

**THANKS FOR DOING
YOUR PART TO SAVE
OUR IMPORTANT
WATER RESOURCES!**



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Efficient Lawn Watering



Washakie County Conservation District

Your lawn is an important part of the landscape. It can provide a wonderful play surface, a carpet for trees and shrubs, and serve as the unifying feature for the entire landscape. In addition, the lawn controls soil erosion, moderates summer heat, produces oxygen and acts as a filter for rain water from roofs, down spouts and driveways. If managed properly, a lawn can be a successful component of a water conserving landscape.

Overwatering of lawns not only wastes water, but causes non-point source pollution. On a per-acre basis, it has been estimated that ten times more fertilizer and pesticides are applied to urban lawns and gardens than is applied to farm fields.

WORKING TO IMPROVE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

Save Water—Save Money

During the summer, water use doubles over what it is in the winter. Beyond the strain on the water system, it is also quite



noticeable in your monthly bill. As much as 80% of the water used during the summer, is used outside watering the lawn. Most of the time, people over-water their lawn significantly. This over-watering wastes a precious natural resource, can lead to an unhealthy lawn, and increases costs to the homeowner.

We live in an area that receives very little rainfall. It is prudent to have a lawn that is healthy and designed to thrive with less water.

The good news is that, with a little effort and some planning, you can achieve significant savings.

When to Water

The need for watering depends mainly your soil and of course, the weather. A plant needs to be watered if young growing shoots begin to droop, wilt, turn to a bluish-green or gray color, or growth slows down. Grass near paved surfaces or on steeper slopes will dry more quickly.

Another way to gauge when you need to water is to push a screwdriver into the ground and observe and feel the soil. If the soil is wet or moist, do not water.



Adjust irrigation frequency to the weather since water use is closely related to temperature and wind. During the growing season, moisture use will vary from less than 1/2 inch to more than 2 inches per week.

It is best to water early in the morning for best results. Avoid watering in the evening to help control plant diseases. Avoid watering when it is very windy and in the midday sun so that the water is not immediately lost to evaporation.

Notes

A series of horizontal lines provided for taking notes.

Efficient Lawn Watering

Plant Wisely

Reduce the turf area of your landscape. This can be achieved by installing drought tolerant plantings instead of turf. Plant low water demanding plants in beds and use mulch to reduce water loss due to evaporation. You will not only preserve water, but you will control weeds, while maintaining a very attractive yard.

Xeriscape

From the Greek works 'xeros' for 'dry', Xeriscape is the creation of a garden that uses less water than traditional landscaping. Xeriscaping is landscaping with slow-growing, drought-tolerant plants to conserve water and reduce yard trimmings. In addition to conserving water, Xeriscape also provides many attractive planting options, presents minimal pest and disease problems, and creates a garden that thrives with little fertilizer and required less maintenance. By incorporating yard trimmings into your garden rather than throwing them into the garbage, you also save valuable landfill space.

Rule of Thumb.....

If It Doesn't Grow, Don't Water It!



Efficient Lawn Watering

If your lawn does not look like it needs to be watered, don't water it. If you see pooling of water, stop watering and allow the water to soak in. You may need to break your watering time into several shorter times so that the water does not run-off. Train your grass plants to develop deep roots by infrequent, yet thorough watering. Deeper roots will enable plants to utilize moisture deep in the ground.

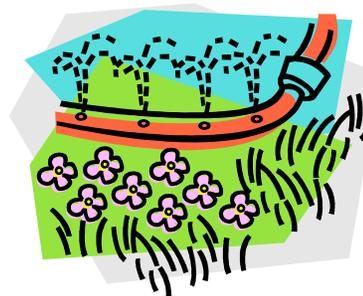
Know Your Soils

Soil is a plant's moisture reservoir. Its capacity depends on soil depth, structure, and texture. Shallow or sandy soils hold less water than deep or fine-textured silt and clay soils. The less moisture-holding capacity of your soils, the more often you must irrigate. Sandy soils may require more frequent applications of two or more times per week. Plant root depths vary widely. Irrigate plants with shallow roots frequently; those with deep roots need more water each time, but not as often. The effective root depth for grass is 24"

Water Holding Capacity of Soils

Texture	Inches of Water/Foot of Soil
Clay	2.0
Silt	1.9
Loam	1.8
Loamy Sand	0.8
Gravel, Sand	0.5

Automatic Sprinkler System



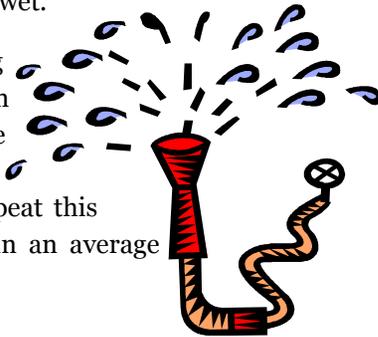
Probably the biggest culprit to unnecessary water use during the summer is unchecked use of automatic sprinklers. How often do you drive by houses during a rain, only to see sprinkler systems on? Or, how often do you see wet driveways, sidewalks, or streets from sprinkler use?

Efficient Lawn Watering

Check and Calibrate Your Sprinklers

Check spray heads for abnormal patterns, or water spraying on driveways, sidewalks and streets. Repair and/or adjust sprinklers so that only what needs water gets wet.

Using a rain/sprinkler measuring gauge, place it in the spray pattern of a sprinkler head. Run the sprinkler for 15 minutes, then check the level in the gauge. Repeat this two times in other areas to obtain an average sprinkler output in inches.



Now that you know how much water your sprinkler applies, use the chart below and weekly rainfall estimate to estimate how long you should run you sprinkler. Generally, during the hottest part of the summer, your lawn requires about 1” of water a week.

Lawn watering guide

	Average depth in gauge after a 15 minute test period						
	1/8”	1/4”	3/8”	1/2”	5/8”	3/4”	7/8”
Spring	41	29	23	19	17	15	13
Summer	53	37	29	24	23	19	17
Fall	29	21	17	15	13	12	10

Watering Time in Minutes Per Week for One Inch of Water

Fix Leaks

Hoses, sprinklers and sprinkler systems are all prone to leaks. Some leaks are obvious and some may be hidden below ground. Poor maintenance and freezing temperatures may have taken a toll on your irrigation equipment. If you have an automatic underground system, you may need professional assistance to determine if you have any hidden leaks. Check for leaks yearly...it’s cheap and can save you money.

Efficient Lawn Watering

Water Requirements for Turf Grasses

Kentucky Bluegrass 1 to 2 inches/week

Blue Gramma 1/2 to 3/4 inch/week

Buffalo Grass 1/2 to 3/4 inch/week

Crested Wheatgrass 3/4 inch/week

Smooth Brome 1/2 inch/week

Tall Fescue 3/4 inch/week

Lawn Care

Maintaining your turf grass at a 2 1/2 inch height or greater will help reduce soil temperature and water loss from evaporation and will have a better chance of surviving dry conditions.

Leave grass clippings on your lawn. Organic matter increases your soil’s ability to hold water, reduces evaporation, keeps the soil surface cooler, allowing for optimum plant growth, and provides nutrients for the lawn.

Aerate once a year in the Spring, to help water penetrate into the soils and help prevent buildup of thatch. Aeration allows the movement of air and water into the soil.

