

Beneficial Gardening Practices

The efficiency of an irrigation system can be improved with the following efforts:

Group plants according to their water-use needs. Mixing plants of different water needs on the same irrigation valve means some plants can receive the right amount of water while the other plants receive too much or too little water. Additionally, areas of different exposure should be isolated on separate irrigation valves so shady areas can be watered less than areas receiving full sun.

Trim plants and cut grass away from sprinklers to prevent interference with spray patterns.

Apply ¾" of mulch on bare soil.

This will help prevent evaporation, moderate soil temperature, and reduce weed growth. Mulch also increases the soil's ability to absorb water. Biodegradable products (bark or wood chips) are perfect because they release nutrients into the soil as they break down. To prevent plant damage keep mulch and irrigation emitters clear of tree trunks and plant root crowns.

Install a rain shut-off device on automatic irrigation timers to avoid watering during rainfall.

Aerate and de-thatch lawns so water penetrates the soil more effectively.

Mow lawns high.

Raise the height of your mower to 2-3 inches for cool season grass (bluegrass, rye, and fescue type lawns) and 1 inch for warm season grass (bermudagrass, bentgrass and dichondra type lawns).

Use a broom, not the hose, to clean patios, driveways and sidewalks.

Put a shut-off nozzle on garden hoses to prevent water waste when using your hose.

Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, and faucets.

Phase out high water-use plants and replace them with low water-use plants.

Form Berms to create a basin around each tree and large shrub so you can water deeply (where the water is needed) and less frequently.

Add moisture absorbent polymers to the soil of potted and container plants. These polymers may decrease the frequency of irrigation events. The plants will have the same appetite for water, but some water savings may be realized due to a reduction in evaporation.

Tell your gardener about your water conservation goals (if you have a gardener).



**Water Conservation
Doing Our Share**