

Outdoor Watering Tips

Tips for saving water on the lawn:

Don't water between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Up to 30 percent of the water sprayed on lawns during the heat of the day can be lost to evaporation.

Apply just an inch of water to your lawn once a week during the summer. That will encourage deeper root systems and make for healthier grass.

Cut back on your irrigation frequency in the fall and winter. Lawns don't need as much water during the cooler seasons. Applying about an inch every two weeks in the fall, and even less in the winter, should be plenty.

Cycle and soak to avoid runoff. It takes a while for water to soak into our North Texas clay soils. Rather than running your spray heads for long periods of time, try running zones in shorter bursts, with one hour between cycles. This will give the water time to soak in instead of running off.

Use rain and freeze sensors. They'll trigger automatic sprinkler systems to shut off during downpours or when temperatures dip near freezing. They could reduce your outdoor water use by five to ten percent.

Install a "smart" controller. It's an irrigation clock that automatically adjusts run times in response to weather conditions.

Check your irrigation system regularly. Fix leaks or damaged sprinkler heads and make sure they're aimed at the landscape, not the street or sidewalk.

Don't scalp your lawn. Taller grass holds moisture better and slows down evaporation. Leaving lawn clippings on your lawn does the same and also returns valuable nutrients to the soil.

Tips for saving water outside the house:

Use drip irrigation for flowerbeds, ground cover, vegetable gardens and container plants. A drip system saves water by allowing you to target water at or near plant root zones. If you already have spray heads in place, you can use adapters to convert from spray to drip.

Save water by replacing little-used areas of your lawn with other types of landscaping and water-stingy plants.

Use mulch. Placing a three-to-four inch layer of mulch, like bark or wood chips, to flowerbeds and around trees and shrubs helps retain moisture and limit weed growth.

Take your car to a car wash that uses a water-recycling program. If you wash your car at home, use a bucket of water and a hose with a nozzle on it to stop the flow between rinsing.

Sweep your driveway and sidewalk instead of hosing them down, which uses about five gallons of water a minute.