

# Water Conservation Tip



## Irrigation Scheduling

Use the *cycle and soak* method for watering your lawn and landscape. For fixed and pop-up spray sprinklers, water 3 cycles a day, 4 to 6 minutes each cycle.

Schedule start times one hour apart. If you have rotating sprinklers, water 3 cycles a day, 10 to 12 minutes each cycle.



# Water Conservation Tip



## Fall Back Watering Guide

Did you know there are 5-1/2 hours LESS sunlight per day in December than in July? That means lawns and landscapes need less water each month during the fall.

The schedule below displays the recommended watering Days per Week for Contra Costa County. Note: your microclimate and individual circumstances may vary, so try this schedule and then make small adjustments as needed.

### Watering Days per Week

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Lawn	4	3	2	1-2	Off
Shrubs	2-3	1-2	1	1 or Off	Off

# Water Conservation Tip



## Sprinkler Systems

Taller grass around sprinkler heads can block the intended spray pattern. Inspect your sprinklers the day before your usual mow day. If the spray does not clear the grass when the sprinkler heads pop-up, you will either need to raise up the heads or cut the grass shorter around the heads. When installing sprinklers in lawn, always use 4-inch pop-ups.



# Water Conservation Tip



## Irrigation Scheduling

Shrubs or lawn in shade (north/east side of your house) will generally require up to 50 percent less water than the same plants in full sun (south/west side of your home). Adjust your watering schedule to account for the different microclimates in your garden.



# Water Conservation Tip



## Landscape Maintenance



Check your irrigation system every couple of weeks for broken or misaligned sprinkler heads and drip emitters. Check lawn sprinklers for damage after mowing. This can save a significant amount of water and keep your landscape looking great!

# Water Conservation Tip



## Sprinkler Systems

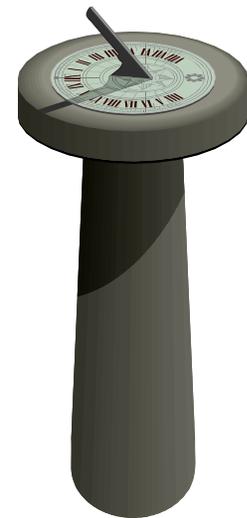
Sprinkler heads in shrub areas can often become blocked by the plants. This can result in flooded areas adjacent to the sprinklers and dry areas between the sprinklers. If working properly, shrub sprinklers should spray unobstructed for at least 4 feet. Solutions to this problem include pruning back plants, moving plants, raising up sprinklers, moving sprinklers, or adding new sprinklers. Inspect your shrub areas to determine the best solution for you.

# Water Conservation Tip



## Irrigation Scheduling

The optimum time to water your landscape is between 3AM and 8AM. This is because the sun is down, temperature is cooler and the wind is generally calm. Watering during the day can result in as much as 30% of the water being lost to evaporation.



# Water Conservation Tip



Flush drip irrigation lines and filters once or twice a year. Find the "end cap" on your drip line. This should be at the point furthest from your valve box. Open the cap and briefly run the system to flush out any debris that could be clogging your line. Turn off the water before trying to recap your line. Having two people to do this job makes it even easier.

*Note, if you are using untreated water, you will need to flush your system more often.*



# Water Conservation Tip



Install drip emitters right at the edge of the rootball of new plants. Generally it is best to use 2 emitters for 1 gallon plants and 3 emitters for 5 gallon plants. Remember, as the plant grows, you may need to add additional emitters farther out from the center of the plant.

# Water Conservation Tip



Plants are much healthier when they have deep roots. To create deep-rooted plants, water slowly so the water can absorb before it runs off. For sprinkler systems, this requires breaking up the watering time into multiple cycles. So, for example, instead of watering one time for 15 minutes, water three times for 5 minutes with an hour in between. Deep rooted plants will thrive on very few watering days per week or month compared to shallow rooted plants.



# Water Conservation Tip



Check your sprinklers every few weeks to confirm they are spraying where they should be. By simply adjusting a tilted or sunken sprinkler you can eliminate brown spots before they occur. Broken sprinklers that go unchecked can waste water and damage property.

**Be proactive!!**



# Water Conservation Tip



If your sprinklers cause excessive misting, there is a good chance your pressure is too high. This wastes water and plants don't get the water they need. There are several ways to correct the problem. If the entire sprinkler system has high pressure, a single pressure regulator can fix the problem. Alternatively, pressure-regulating sprinkler heads or



pressure-compensating nozzles will remedy the problem for each individual sprinkler. Consult your local professional irrigation equipment supplier to learn more.

# Water Conservation Tip



To reduce water running off your lawn and landscape, use the cycle and soak method to water. For standard pop-up spray sprinklers, set your timer to water for 4 to 6 minutes at 4:00 AM, 5:00AM and at 6:00AM. This will ensure the water soaks into the soil rather than running off. The watering days per week will vary depending on the weather. Generally in June and July lawns will need 3 to 4 days per week.

# Water Conservation Tip



Water your lawn and landscape between evening and early morning. The temperatures are cooler, wind is calm and there is little or no evaporation. This will result in your plants looking their best and saving water from evaporation. If we have an especially hot spell avoid the temptation to water in the middle of the day. Instead, wait until the sun has set or until the next morning.



# Water Conservation Tip



Check sprinklers for overspray onto adjacent pavement, walls, fences, decks and homes. Severe damage can result from overspray. One of the primary reasons homeowners replace fences is due to rotting fence posts. This rotting is primarily a result of the post repeatedly getting wet and dry from sprinklers. You can increase the life of your fence and other structures by eliminating overspray.



# Water Conservation Tip



Check for slow, constant leaks in your irrigation system. The usual location for constant leaks is the irrigation valves. Irrigation valves can leak due to a worn out diaphragm in the valve assembly. This results in water seeping down the sprinkler pipe to the lowest sprinkler head. If you have sprinkler heads that always seem to always have a little water flowing out of them and even have moss growing on them, you might have a leaking valve. Contact a landscape professional to repair the valve assembly.



# Water Conservation Tip



Sprinklers should be installed so that each head sprays the full distance to the next head. This is called head-to-head coverage. If your system is not installed with head-to-head coverage, the water is probably not being applied very evenly. This will result in stressed lawn/plants and over watering to compensate.

A relatively new sprinkle nozzle called the MP Rotator Nozzle is now available that can improve this situation. This nozzle sprays farther and more uniformly. It can be purchased and installed on your existing pop-up sprinkler head. Also, if your system has low pressure, these nozzles can help. Visit a local irrigation supplier for information on these nozzles.

# Water Conservation Tip



Consider "smart" technology. Irrigation timers are now available that automatically adjust their schedule based on real time weather changes. This can significantly reduce the amount of time you would have to spend adjusting your watering schedule. Also, the District is now offering **rebates** for eligible customers who purchase a smart timer. For

information on the rebate program and on smart irrigation timers, visit the CCWD conservation website at [www.ccwater.com/conserve](http://www.ccwater.com/conserve) and click on the link for "Smart Sprinkler Timer Rebates."