

Water Conservation Tip



Landscape Maintenance



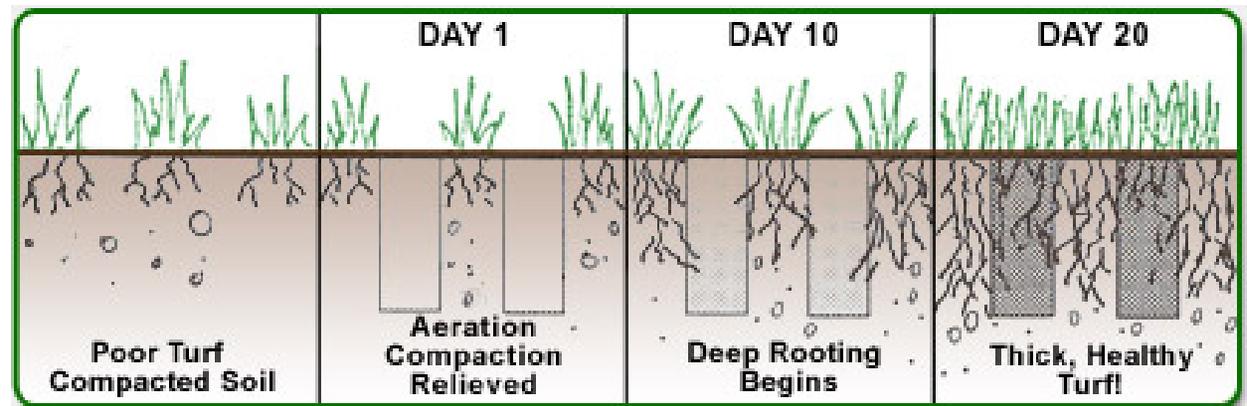
Check your irrigation system every couple of weeks for broken or misaligned sprinkler heads and drip emitters. Check lawn sprinklers for damage after mowing. This can save a significant amount of water and keep your landscape looking great!

Water Conservation Tip



Landscape Maintenance

Aerate your lawn. Aeration is the process of removing soil plugs from your lawn, which allows water and oxygen to get to the roots. Aerate your lawn in fall or spring.



Water Conservation Tip



Landscape Maintenance

Replace your gas-powered mower with an electric mulching mower. Mulching mowers chop up the grass blades and return them to the soil. This adds nutrients (nitrogen) back into the soil and results in a healthier lawn. Also, remember to keep your lawn mower blades sharp. A dull blade will shred the tips of the grass blades and result in a browner looking lawn.



Water Conservation Tip



Landscape Maintenance

Keep your family and pets safe and your neighborhood creeks free from pesticides. Before you use any pesticide, look for non-toxic alternatives. ***Integrated Pest Management*** offers many non-toxic alternatives for removing pests such as ants, wasps, etc. For a complete list of non-toxic pest management alternatives contact the Conservation Department.



Dispose of old pesticides properly. The best way is to take them to the Contra Costa Household Hazardous Waste Facility. For those who live in Contra Costa County the facility is located at 4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez, next to Central Contra Costa Sanitary District. You can visit their website at www.centrialsan.org/services/hhwcf.html.

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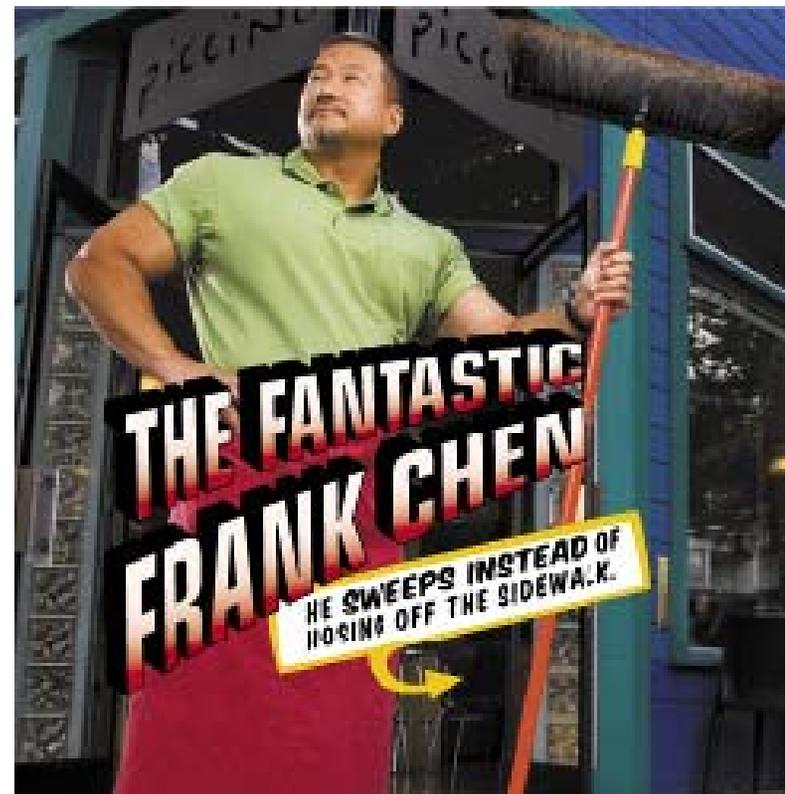
Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light and water.



Water Conservation Tip



Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save up to 80 gallons of water every time.



Water Conservation Tip



Mowing your lawn when the soil is very wet will result in compacted soil. This makes it more difficult for the grass to grow which results in a poor looking lawn. It is best to wait several days after the rain before you mow.



Water Conservation Tip



The ideal time to prune trees and shrubs is in late winter, when plants are mostly dormant, but after the chance of a freeze. Finish heavy pruning before buds show evidence of swelling. Don't prune more than one-third of the living tissue of a tree or woody shrub during the year.

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



To check if your lawn requires more water don't just look at the grass but rather look at the soil. Use a trowel to check the moisture in the top six inches of the soil. If the soil is moist and sticks together, you don't need to water.

Proper lawn watering can save thousands of gallons of water annually.



Water Conservation Tip



Mow lawns 2-1/2" to 3" high during the summer. This will improve the quality of the lawn and reduce water demand. Taller grass blades will promote deeper roots, and the taller grass will shade the soil resulting in less water evaporating from the soil. Your lawn will be healthier and will look much greener.



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



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



Do not use a blower to clean out shrub beds and other planting areas. This common mistake will remove mulch and topsoil, which will expose plant roots at the soil surface. Instead, hand clean out planting areas and keep a 2" to 3" layer of mulch in all planting areas.

