



Lawn & Landscape *Watering Schedule*



CONTRA COSTA
WATER DISTRICT

Seasonal Changes Affect Water Demand

Day Length Doesn't it seem like it gets darker earlier in the winter than in the summer? Well, in fact, it does. In the winter, the sun rises later and sets earlier than in the summer. June 21, the summer solstice, is the longest day of the year with nearly 15 hours of daylight. December 21, the winter solstice, is the shortest day of the year with only 9.5 hours of daylight. That's 5.5 hours less of sunlight! What does this mean for our lawns and landscapes? It means that as the days get shorter, lawns and landscapes will require less and less water.

Sun Angle Have you ever noticed that the sun doesn't go as high in the sky during the winter as it does in the summer? In fact, during December, the sun is only one-third as high in the sky as it is in June. This has to do with the earth's axis and how the earth rotates around the sun. So how does this affect the water needs of my lawn and landscape? Well, when the angle of the sun is high in the sky, like during the summer, the sunlight hits the earth more directly, which causes plants to need more water. When the angle of the sun is lower in the sky, like during the winter, the sunlight hits the earth at a lower angle, which means plants need less water. This means that from June to December, plants will need less and less water.

Additional Ways to Save Water in Your Garden

Mulch

Add mulch to all planting areas every year to ensure there is a 2" to 3" layer. This will improve plant health, reduce water evaporation loss, improve soil, and keep soil temperature cool in the summer.

Reduce Your Lawn

Turf grass or lawn is the single biggest water-using plant in most home landscapes. Consider replacing some of all of your lawn with a beautiful garden. Ask your local nursery for plants that thrive in Contra Costa County.

Mow

Mow lawns to 2.5 to 3 inches. This will improve the quality of the lawn and reduce water demand.

Use a Broom

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

Aerate

Aerate your lawn. This allows water and oxygen to get to the roots. You can either leave the soil plugs on the lawn or remove them to another part of the garden.

For more information on Water Conservation Programs and Tips, visit www.cewater.com or call (925)688-8320.

Landscape professionals use a variety of techniques to maximize landscape quality and water use efficiency. Below are several watering techniques that professional irrigators use to maximize every drop.



Repeat Cycles

Clay soil cannot absorb water as fast as sprinklers apply it. So instead of watering for one long cycle, use 2 or 3 shorter cycles with an hour in between. This will allow the water to soak in much better & encourage deeper roots.

Check Sprinklers

Once a month inspect the sprinklers while they are working. Check for broken, bent or misaligned heads. Also trim back grass or other plants that are blocking the sprinkler.



When to Water

The optimum time to water your landscape is between 3:00 am and 8:00 am. This is because the sun is down, the 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.



Micro-Climates

Plants growing in shade (north/east side of your house) will generally require up to 50% less water than the same plants in full sun (south/west side of your home). Adjust your watering schedule to account for the different micro-climates in your yard.

Water like the Pros! The most efficient way to water lawns and landscapes is to water deeply and infrequently while adjusting the schedule every month to reflect seasonal changes. The following is the recommended watering schedule for lawns and landscapes in Contra Costa County.

Month	LAWNS			TREES, SHRUBS, GROUNDCOVERS		
	Pop-up sprinklers: Run 3 cycles of 3 to 6 minutes	Impact/Rotor sprinklers: Run 3 cycles of 7 to 10 minutes	Multi-stream/ MP rotator: Run 3 cycles of 15 to 20 minutes	Pop-ups/ fixed spray sprinklers: Run 3 cycles of 3 to 6 minutes	Impact/Rotor sprinklers: Run 3 cycles of 9 to 12 minutes	Multi-stream/ MP rotators: Run 3 cycles of 20 to 24 minutes
Jan and Feb	Off			Off		
Mar	1 day per week			Off		
Apr	1-2 days per week			1 day per week		
May	2-3 days per week			1-2 days per week		
Jun	3-4 days per week			2 days per week		
Jul	3-4 days per week			2-3 days per week		
Aug	3-4 days per week			2 days per week		
Sep	3 days per week			1-2 days per week		
Oct	2 days per week			1 day per week		
Nov	1 day per week			Off		
Dec	Off			Off		

Use the above schedule as a guide. Monitor your landscape and adjust the schedule for rain or other conditions.