Outdoor Water Conservation

Water Waste Checks

Look. Check to see if your watering system sprays beyond the lawn area. Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.

Look. Check the temperature. Watering should only be done if the temperature is between 10°C to 20°C. Watering when it is too cold leaves your lawn susceptible to disease. Watering when it is too hot causes the water to evaporate.

Look. Check for leaks along watering hoses and at the connection at the tap.

Look. Check that your hose has not been left running at night.

Reduce Your Use

Water in the morning, between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. when temperatures are lower and winds are calmer.

Monitor your lawn when watering to ensure water does not pool on the lawn or run over the sides.

Use mulch to reduce evaporation and weeds. Aerate your lawn periodically.

Replace broken hoses immediately.

Use trickle irrigation hoses for smaller areas, trees, flower beds and gardens.

Replace damaged outdoor taps. Catch leaking water in a bucket until the part is replaced. New connectors can be purchased at most hardware stores.

Information from Saskh2o.ca

LAWN MAINTENANCE

Reduce Your Use

During long periods of hot weather allow grass to reach eight to ten cm in height.

Sharpen your lawn mower blades. Dull lawn mower blades tear grass instead of cutting. This leaves the lawn at risk of heat stress and thus requires more water.

Leave clippings on the lawn. They trap moisture and fertilize the lawn.

Avoid the use of herbicides and insecticides. They prevent the natural breakdown of the lawn clippings.

Replace dead sections of lawn by placing a new section of sod over the dead area. Over-watering a dead area of lawn will not bring it back to life. It just simply wastes water and can begin to kill surrounding lawns.

Do not try to revive dead patches of grass during a drought. Brown grass is not dead, it is dormant and will return to its lush green once temperatures drop.

Fertilizing

Fertilize lawns once a year in either spring or fall. Use natural fertilizers, which are organic sources of nitrogen as they dissolve slowly. Sources of natural fertilizer include: cow manure, bone meal, mushroom compost and mixed organic fertilizer. Fertilize your lawn right before a rain is forecast. This saves you from having to water and ensures good absorption of the fertilizer by the soil.

Water saving tips = Money saving tips

$ Dollars and Eco sense ¢

SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

Be wise when setting your sprinkler system TIMER!

Overwatering in the summer WILL COST YOU MONEY!

CHECK your sprinkler system for broken sprinkler heads or underground leaks. Cutting down water waste in your sprinkler system will reduce the gallons of water (and sewer) used **and will drop the cost of your summer water bill.**

AVOID THE HOSE! Instead of having the kids run through a sprinkler on a hot day, fill a kiddie pool or use handheld water toys instead. For outdoor cleaning, use a broom on the deck or driveway and wash the car and home windows using a bucket and a sponge.

Be pro-active and read your meter. Check your consumption periodically to avoid any surprises.

Outdoors

During the growing season water use can increase by as much as 50%. While lawns require a lot of water, much of this water is wasted -- lost due to over-watering and evaporation.

Watering equipment also plays a part in how much water is saved and lost. Ideally, sprinklers should be suited to the size and shape of the lawn. That way, you avoid watering driveways and sidewalks. Installing timers on outdoor taps can be a wise investment.

Sprinklers that lay water down in a flat pattern are better than oscillating sprinklers which lose as much as 50% of what they disperse through evaporation. Drip irrigation systems which apply water only to the roots zone are the most efficient -- and the most expensive -- alternative.

The water you use to water your lawn doesn't have to come out of a tap. A cistern, which captures and stores rainwater, can be used as a source of irrigation water. A rain barrel can adequately fulfil this function.

Finally, consider a low-maintenance landscape -- one which requires little more water than nature provides. Often called **xeriscaping**, the principles of a low-maintenance landscape are as follows:

- a reduced amount of lawn;
- proper plan selection making use of native grasses, shrubs and trees;
- the use of rain barrels / roof drainage
- mulching to reduce evaporative losses around shrubs and trees;
- improvements to soils;
- a proper irrigation system; and
- planned maintenance.

The most significant savings of course, come from a reduction in lawn area and switching from exotic plant forms to native species which require less water. In general, lawn areas should not exceed what is useful for play and social activities, and should be limited to the backyard where the family spends the majority of its time.

In the home

So where do we start? The first step is to identify where we use water in the home. Then we need to decide on what to do to reduce the amount of water we use, either by eliminating wasteful practices and habits, or by improving the efficiency of our water using fixtures and devices. Since we waste so much, this should be a relatively easy and painless process. The prime area to target is the bathroom, where nearly 65% of all indoor water use occurs.

Reduce

Much of the water "consumed" in our daily activities is simply wasted. Taps are left running while we brush our teeth. Dishwashers and laundry machines are operated without full loads. Really, everywhere we use water there is room for improvement. Here are just a few examples for both indoor and outdoor water use.

- Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket or flush it unnecessarily.
- Take short showers -- five minutes or less should do. If you prefer baths, fill the tub only one-quarter full.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refridgerator rather than letting your tap run to get cold water when you want a drink. (Rinse the bottle every few days.)
- More than 50% of the water applied to lawns and gardens is lost due to evaporation, or run-off because of overwatering. Find out how much water your lawn really needs. As a general rule, most lawns and gardens require little more than 2 to 3 centimeters (1 inch) of water per week.
- To reduce loses due to evaporation, water early in the morning (after the dew has dried).
- Watering off-peak helps the utility manage its load on the system and helps ensure adequate reservoir levels and water pressure for possible fire emergencies.
- When washing a car, fill a bucket with water and use a sponge. This can save about 300 litres of water.

Repair

Leaks can be costly. A leak of only one drop per second wastes about 10 000 litres of water per year. Most leaks are easy to find and to fix, at very little cost.