

Water Efficiency Tip



Sprinkler Irrigation Scheduling

Use the *cycle and soak* method for watering your lawn and landscape. For fixed and pop-up spray sprinklers, water 3 cycles per irrigation day. Schedule start times one hour apart. Stream rotor sprinklers or micro/ drip irrigation deliver water at lower rates, so run these systems longer provided it does not create runoff to sidewalks or driveways.



Water Efficiency 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. Note: your microclimate and individual circumstances may vary, so try this schedule and then make small adjustments as needed.

Watering Days per Week

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

Water Efficiency 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 Efficiency Tip



Indoor

Check for leaks in your toilets. Simply place some food coloring* into the tank behind the bowl. If the color appears in the bowl after ten minutes, it means you have a leak. Typically, the leak is a result of the water level being set too high or the flapper needs to be replaced. Leaks can cause significant water waste in an otherwise conserving household, so get them fixed!



** Sweetwater Authority offers free toilet test dye tablets. Call 619-409-6779*

Water Efficiency 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 Efficiency 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 Efficiency 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.

Call the Sweetwater Authority Water Efficiency Helpline to schedule a free water smart check-up of your irrigation system. Call 619-409-6779

Water Efficiency Tip



Indoor

If your showerhead can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace it with a high-efficiency showerhead. Drop by the Authority office and pick up a free high quality, high-efficiency showerhead today.



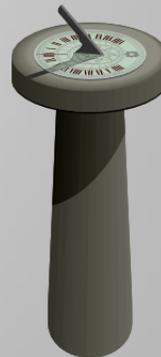
Water Efficiency Tip



Irrigation Scheduling

The optimum or best time to water your landscape is between 3:00 AM and 6:00 AM*. 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.

**Customers are encouraged to limit sprinkler irrigation times to the hours of 6:00 pm to 9:00 am.*

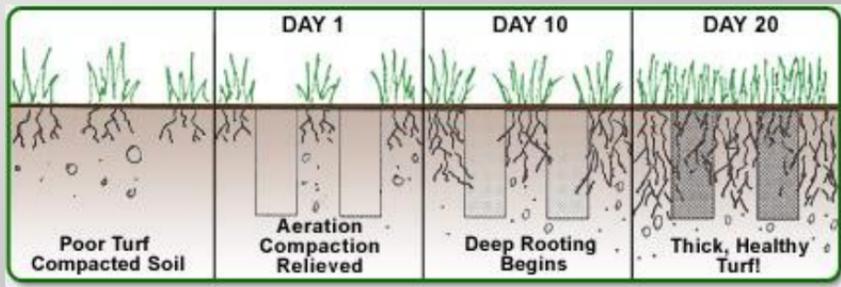


Water Efficiency Tip



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 Efficiency Tip



Landscape Design

Select plants that do well in our climate and soil. San Diego County has hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters, and many of us have heavy clay soil. Although nurseries offer a wide variety of plants, you'll have the greatest long-term success by choosing plants that thrive in our local conditions. Since the majority of residential water use is in our yards, you can improve your water use efficiency by choosing plants that require less water. Get water efficiency tips at www.watersmartsd.org and gardening ideas at The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College (www.thegarden.org). You can also pick up a free Sunset magazine water-wise gardening tips at the Authority office.



Water Efficiency Tip



Indoor

By replacing your older top-loading clothes washer with a new high-efficiency model, you can save a significant amount of water and energy. High-efficiency washers use 50 percent less water and energy than conventional washers, and they are kinder to your clothes. Rebates from SoCalWaterSmart for High Efficiency Clothes Washers start at \$85. www.socalwatersmart.com



Water Efficiency Tip



Landscape Design

Group plants with similar water needs together to get the most out of your watering. This “hydro-zoning” will ensure plants are not over-watered or under-watered.

Avoid planting lawn in areas that are hard to water, such as steep slopes and narrow strips along sidewalks and driveways. If the only time you walk on your lawn is when you mow it, it may be time to consider replacing it with a water efficient garden.

Goto www.sweetwater.org for landscape ideas.



Water Efficiency 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 Efficiency Tip



Landscape Maintenance

Keep your family and pets safe and your neighborhoods 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. To learn more about non-toxic pest management alternatives contact the County of San Diego, Dept. of Agriculture, Weights and Measures.



www.sandiegocounty.gov/awm/ipm_public.html



Dispose of old pesticides properly. The best way is to take them to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event.



<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/waste/hhw.html>

Water Efficiency Tip



Irrigation Scheduling

Automatic irrigation timers should be turned off in the rainy season, usually December – March. And, irrigating during and 48 hours after rain is prohibited. Most plants will not require irrigation water until spring. Manually water if necessary.



Water Efficiency Tip



Interior Water Use

Did you know that toilets have been evolving to become more efficient? Prior to 1982, most toilets flushed 5 to 7 gallons per flush. After 1982 toilets flushed with 3.5 gallons per flush. In the early 1990's the plumbing code changed to require all toilets sold after 1992 to use 1.6 gallons per flush. Now there are toilets available that flush with even less water. These *Premium High Efficiency Toilets* (PHETs) use only 1.1 gallons per flush. There are several different types including standard gravity flush models, dual flush models, and air-pressure assisted 1.0 gallon models. Also, the new PHETs are required to meet strict performance standards to ensure they flush properly. SoCalWaterSmart is currently providing rebates of up to \$40 per PHET. www.socalwatersmart.com



Water Efficiency Tip



Sometimes when people want to get a glass of water they will run the water in the sink to make sure the water is cold.

Instead, keep a glass container of water in the fridge for drinking. This will eliminate the need to run the water each time.



Water Efficiency Tip



If you notice frost or a freeze has damaged a plant, leave it alone until warmer weather arrives and new growth appears. Pruning or transplanting a damaged plant during winter months can hurt or even kill it.



Water Efficiency Tip



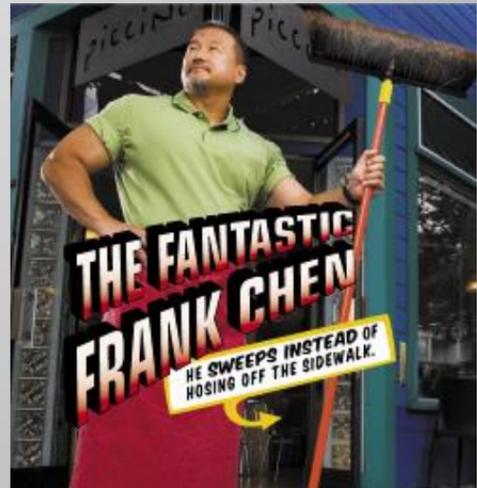
Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light and water.



Water Efficiency Tip



Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save up to 80 gallons of water every time. If you must use a hose for sanitary or safety reasons, make sure it has an automatic shut-off nozzle.



Water Efficiency Tip



Run your clothes washer and dishwasher with full loads. This will maximize the water and energy efficiency of the appliances.

Water Efficiency Tip



We all know that you shouldn't run the water in the sink when brushing your teeth. Another water saving tip is to put a plug in the bathroom sink when shaving rather than rinsing your razor under the running faucet.



Water Efficiency 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 Efficiency 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 Efficiency Tip



Mulch is the little-noticed workhorse of many a smart gardener's landscape. Maintain a 2" to 3" layer of organic mulch in all planting areas. This will improve plant health, reduce water evaporation loss, improve soil, and keep soil temperature cool in the summer. Additional mulch should be added at least once per year.



Water Efficiency Tip



When choosing plants at the nursery, make sure the plants have healthy root systems. When you pull the root-ball out of the container, the soil mix should stay in contact with the roots. Never buy a container-grown tree or shrub with tightly congested roots or one with thick roots poking through the drainage holes.



Water Efficiency 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 well water, you will need to flush your drip irrigation lines more often.



Water Conservation Tip



Install drip emitters right at the edge of the root-ball 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.



Use short path or “flag” emitters if your drip line is fed by a non-pressurized gravity line, such as a hose from a rain barrel.

Water Efficiency 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 30 minutes, water three times for 10 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 Efficiency 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 Efficiency 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 Efficiency Tip



Apply a 2 to 3-inch layer of mulch to your landscape. This will reduce water evaporation by up to 70 percent, especially during the hot summer months. Mulch will also reduce weeds and keep the plants roots cool in the summer. As an added bonus, mulch will slowly decompose over the year adding nutrients to the soil.

Water Efficiency 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 Efficiency 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 supplier to learn more.

Water Efficiency Tip



To prevent irrigation runoff from your landscape, use the cycle and soak method to water. For standard pop-up sprinklers, set your timer to water for 10 minutes at 4:00 AM, 5:00AM and at 6:00AM. This should ensure the water soaks into the soil rather than running off.

Water Efficiency 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 Efficiency 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 fence posts repeatedly getting wet and dry from sprinklers.

State Water Waste Prohibitions prohibit runoff to sidewalks and streets.



Water Efficiency 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 or install a check valve to prevent water from draining out of the lowest sprinkler head.



Water Efficiency Tip



Clothes washing machine water can be used to irrigate your landscape.

“Laundry to Landscape” retro-fits provide owners the option to redirect the grey water from clothes washers to a sub-surface drip line for their landscape, instead of going to the sewer.

Sweetwater Authority provides a \$75 rebate toward purchase and installation of a Single Source Grey Water System Retro-fit.



Water Efficiency Tip



Rain barrels can capture and store rain that falls on roofs and then irrigate landscapes when they need water again. As a rule of thumb...

1,000 sq feet of roof surface captures 625 gallons for every 1 inch of rainfall.

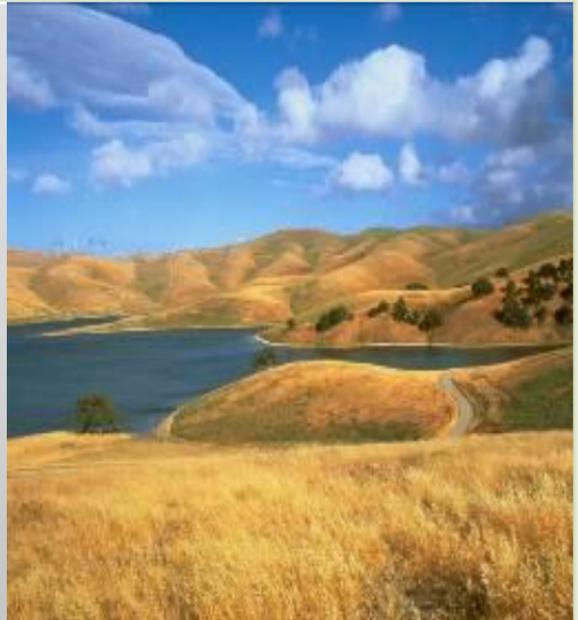
SoCalWaterSmart offers rebates for rain barrels and cisterns.



Water Efficiency Tip



Using water efficiently is a good idea all year. But it is an especially good idea during this time of year. By using water efficiently now, more water is saved in the region for next year. And if we have another dry winter, we are going to need every drop. So renew your conservation efforts and ensure you are using every drop efficiently.



Water Efficiency Tip



Sprinklers should be installed so that each head sprays the full distance to the next head. This is called head-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 sprinkle nozzle called the MP Rotator Nozzle is 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.

Water Efficiency Tip



When washing your car, use a hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle so water isn't running constantly. This can prevent a significant amount of water waste.

You can use even less water by using a local car wash that recycles their water.



Water Efficiency 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.



Water Efficiency Tip



Consider "smart" technology. Weather Based Irrigation Controllers (WBICs) 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.

Rebates are available from SoCalWaterSmart.

www.socalwatersmart.com

- ▣ Rebates start at:
 - \$80/controller for less than 1 acre of landscape
 - \$35/station for more than 1 acre of landscape

- ▣ **WBICs use smart irrigation technology for your landscape:**
Save Water — WBICs can save you from overwatering your landscape by 13,500 gallons a year and ensure optimal plant health.

