



Water-Efficient Guidelines for Landscape and Irrigation

Efficient Water Use Remains Important

While rain and snow have relieved drought conditions in much of the state, conservation must remain a way of life for Californians. The following outdoor water waste restrictions remain permanent:

- Watering outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes runoff to sidewalks, streets, and hardscapes.
- Using a hose, without a shut-off nozzle, for any purpose.
- Using drinking water in non-recirculating fountains or decorative water devices.
- Washing driveways and sidewalks for purposes other than health and safety (removal of unsanitary conditions).
- Watering landscapes during or 48 hours after a rain event.

Tips for Efficient Landscape Watering

For a typical home, watering twice a week during non-rainy months should be sufficient to keep your plants healthy. Rain or shine, the following tips can help improve the efficiency of your outdoor watering practices.

- Water between the hours of 8 pm and 10 am to reduce water lost to evaporation and wind.
- Add organic material to soil, such as mulch or compost, to help improve the soil's ability to retain water.
- Discuss conservation goals with your gardener or landscape professional. Use the right irrigation method and runtime to match your plant's water use needs.
- Turn off irrigation when it's raining or install a rain sensor.
- Check your irrigation system regularly to identify misdirected spray heads or leaks. Manual adjustment is often all that is required to redirect a spray head to the appropriate area and avoid overspray.
- Help avoid water losses from overspray or runoff.
 - For gardens on a sloped area or with compacted soil, adjust the irrigation controller to run multiple start times on watering days. For example, if you normally water for 10 minutes, adjust the schedule to water for 5 minutes, turn off for an hour, and then water again for another 5 minutes. This allows the soil to absorb water at an appropriate rate.
 - Use a mulched or planted border adjacent to sidewalks and other hardscapes to help capture and prevent runoff.
- Consider converting overhead sprinklers to drip irrigation. This is the most effective way to provide water directly the root zone.

Learn more about free SFPUC gardening resources and publications at www.sfwater.org/landscape

- Water-Wise Gardening for San Francisco Guidebook
- Water-Wise Gardening Classes
- Indoor and outdoor water use efficiency surveys
- Low water use plant lists