

Lawn Watering

Paying attention to your watering system is important for maintaining an attractive, healthy lawn and protecting the environment. Poor watering practices are the main reason for dead and dying areas in lawns and a common source of urban runoff. Runoff can move fertilizer, pesticides, or other hazardous chemicals down storm drains and into our waterways.

Landscape with watering in mind.

- ◆ Avoid planting turf species that require frequent watering, such as bluegrass or ryegrass.
- ◆ Design your landscape to minimize water runoff onto hard surfaces and into storm drains.
- ◆ To reduce runoff, install nonirrigated buffer areas, which include water-efficient plants or permeable features, next to sidewalks or on slopes.
- ◆ Aerate heavy or compacted soils, so water can easily move down to reach grass roots.
- ◆ Install an irrigation system that you can adjust to properly water areas of your landscape that have different requirements.

Water only when your lawn needs it.

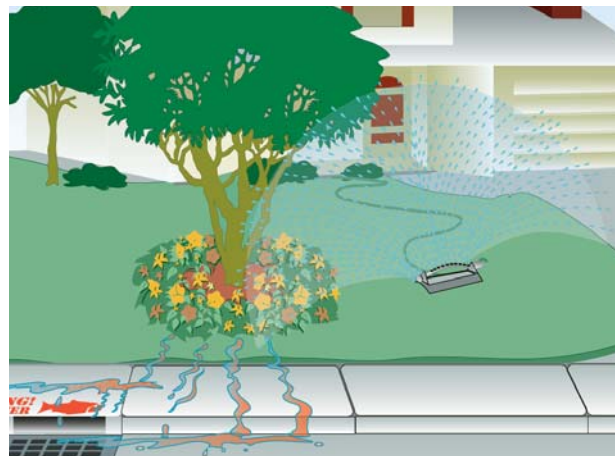
- ◆ Water requirements vary according to turf species, location, and month of the year.
- ◆ Most lawns need water when the top 2 inches of soil have dried out.
- ◆ Shady and sunny areas and different soil types will have different water requirements.
- ◆ Deeper, less frequent watering is best for most lawns. Water only 2 to 3 times a week.
- ◆ Make sure your sprinkler system isn't producing runoff, especially on slopes. If you see runoff, use shorter watering times and repeat the cycle to allow time for the water to move into the soil.
- ◆ Water early in the morning when evaporation and wind are minimal.
- ◆ Adjust your watering schedule seasonally, and shut off your irrigation system during rainy weather.



Maintain your irrigation system.

- ◆ Check your irrigation system regularly for leaks, broken or misdirected heads, faulty valves, and other malfunctions. Adjust sprinklers to keep water off driveways, sidewalks, and streets.
- ◆ Improve your system with devices such as rotor heads, "smart" (ET) controllers, and soil moisture sensors.
- ◆ Use a "can test" to see how evenly your sprinkler system covers different areas of your lawn and to estimate how long to water.

For information about how to perform a can test, water requirements for different turf species, and other lawn care tips, see *The UC Guide to Healthy Lawns* at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/TURF.



Don't let your lawn irrigation wash garden chemicals into storm drains!

Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.

For more information about managing pests, contact your **University of California Cooperative Extension office** listed under the county government pages of your phone book or visit the UC IPM Web site at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.



What you use in your landscape affects our rivers and oceans!

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