



Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water Resources Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet 92-2

Water Efficiency in Your Own Back Yard

Outdoor water conservation is a useful tool in protecting Ohio's greatest resource. Making a commitment to backyard water conservation while caring for your lawn and garden is easy for you and your family to do today.

Watering Lawns and Gardens

During the summer, watering lawns and gardens can *more than double* a normal Ohio household's water usage. You can conserve this water by:

- Keeping the grass at least 3" tall
- Watering slowly once per week with 1"
- Watering in the morning or evening to minimize evaporation



An empty container set in an open area of the yard or garden will assist knowing when 1 inch of water has been applied. Do not forget to credit natural rainfall!

During droughts, grass protects itself by becoming brown and dormant while its roots remain alive and healthy. If concerned, pull up on a clump of grass; resistance means the grass is alive. Mowing less frequently and with a higher cut allows the grass to shade its roots, reducing water needs.

Importantly, don't lock yourself into a fixed schedule. Let the conditions be your guide and water only when necessary. For example, you should not need to water during a cool spell.

"The Foot-Print Test"

Your feet may be your best tool for an efficient lawn-watering schedule. Use the Foot-Print Test by walking across your lawn. If the grass springs back after it has been walked on, your lawn doesn't need water.



Lawn Sprinklers and Hoses

A single lawn sprinkler can use as much as 600 gallons of water per hour. Position your sprinkler so that every drop of water reaches the lawn *only* - not sidewalks, driveways, or streets. You'll also make better use of your sprinkler by avoiding the mist setting, which loses much water to evaporation.



A typical residential landscape can lose as much as 80% of its irrigation water through evaporation!

A garden hose can discharge as much as 6 gallons of water per minute or up to 360 gallons per hour. Equip the hose with a quick-shutoff nozzle and avoid the mist setting. Wash your car only when necessary and use the hose only for rinsing. Don't waste water by using it on anything that's not green and growing. That means using a broom to clean the patio. If playing in the sprinkler, move the play area around so the lawn can be watered as well.

Gardens, Shrubs and Trees

Using mulch in your gardens and around shrubs and young trees holds in water, shades roots and prevents weeds. This not only saves water, but your time as well! Unlike grass, these plants are not drought tolerant, so they should receive watering priority when dry. Consider installing a water-saving drip irrigation system for your garden and shrubs.

An efficient way to water young trees is with tree watering bags. Alternatively, drill a 1/16" hole in the bottom of a 5-gallon bucket. Fill the bucket with water and place it beside the tree's trunk base. A very slow, but steady trickle of water will reach the tree's roots rather than surrounding grass.

Swimming Pools

Because they hold a lot of water, swimming pools offer a big potential for wasting water. Reduce water losses by keeping the level low to minimize splashing. Using a pool cover will minimize evaporation and keep the pool clean.

A pool should lose no more than a quarter inch of water a day due to evaporation. If you suspect leaks, look for:

- Cracks, rust, or thin spots in the liner
- Soggy/muddy areas around the pool
- Pump frequently losing prime



For most leaks, a DIY repair may be all that is needed. However, some leaks will require an expert to find and fix.

Inside the House

Water conservation *inside* your house is a year-round activity. The Division Fact Sheet, “**Water Efficiency at Home**”, offers information and tips to help you conserve water around the house.

Wells

If you're among the many Ohioans who depend upon private wells for their household water needs, consult the Division Fact Sheet, “**Water Efficiency for Private Well Owners.**”

For additional information on efficiency and conservation of Ohio’s water resources, contact:

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