

Top Ten Ways to Save Water in Summer

**50-70% of the water used in the summer is outdoors.
Here are 10 simple ways to use less:**

- ◆ **Check your automatic sprinkler system** - according to a recent study by the American Water Works Association, homes with automatic sprinkler systems use 37% more water than those who do not. Homeowners who use an automatic timer on their systems use 47% more water than those that do not. Be sure to check your system for leaks and misdirected or broken sprinkler heads. If you have a timer, only use it when you will be out of town.
- ◆ **Water your lawn only when needed** - many people make the mistake of watering their lawn or landscape just because it is hot outside. Plants can be stressed by the heat, but they may not need water. Check the soil an inch or so below the surface and if it is dry you need to water. If you walk across your grass and leave footprints, your lawn needs watering.
- ◆ **Use mulch in your landscape**—two to four inches of mulch under trees, shrubs and the garden shades the soil, reduces evaporation and prevents weeds.
- ◆ **Use less water for a healthier lawn** - turf grasses need one inch of water every 5 to 10 days. Watering every other day wastes water and encourages a shallow root system, which makes lawns more susceptible to pests, freezing and drought.
- ◆ **Water with efficient sprinklers** - sprinklers that throw big drops of water close to the ground deliver more water where you need it. Avoid using sprinklers that mist or throw small drops of water high in the air.
- ◆ **Don't water too much at once** - depending on your soil and landscape, you may not be able to apply all the water your landscape needs at one time. Water that runs off to the sidewalk or street is wasted. Give your soil a chance to absorb the water, move the sprinkler to a new location and come back after the water has soaked in, about 30 minutes or more.
- ◆ **Use native and adapted plants** - there are many beautiful plants that flourish in North Texas with very little water or care. Grow plants that belong in this area instead of varieties that are not well suited for this region.
- ◆ **Aerate your lawn** - when soil becomes compacted it is difficult for water to get into the roots of your grass. Use a device that removes a plug of soil instead of just poking a hole into the ground (which will compact it even more).
- ◆ **Use a sprayer with a shut-off valve on your hose** - don't let water run when you are not using it. Use the water you need but do not waste it.
- ◆ **Learn about water-wise landscaping** - go to www.savedallaswater.com or www.txsmartscape.com to learn more about saving water on your landscape. Dallas Water Utilities offers free classes on water-wise gardening in the spring and fall.