

Water Conservation Tips

With summer sizzling and water in high demand, the City of Kingfisher's Water Department would like to share some water conservation tips:

WATERING YOUR LAWN

Helpful Tips

- A thorough soaking once a week is much better for your lawn than several lighter sprinklings. A single, weekly watering forces the grass to grow longer, healthier roots.

- Beware of over watering: in the U.S., for example, lawns are typically over-watered by 30 percent or more. Considering how many folks water their lawns and how often, that's an enormous amount of water! Let's save some for our grandchildren.

- Don't over water your lawn. As a general rule, lawns only need watering every 5 to 7 days in the summer. A hearty rain eliminates the need for watering for as long as two weeks.

The green, green grass of home...

- Everybody knows how to water a lawn. You just run a hose to the front yard and screw in the sprinkler, right? Not exactly. Learning what happens behind the scenes (or rather, beneath the scenes) will help you save water and will produce a healthier and more robust lawn. This short guide will give you some tips on the whole process.

- Test your yard to see what kind of soil it is. If a short section of pipe is available, use it to take a four to six inch sample of the earth. (Otherwise use a trowel.) Sandy soils are very porous, so you need to water them more often. Soils with a higher clay content retain moisture well and won't require as much attention.

Know your lawn's needs

- Your lawn needs an inch of water per week to stay healthy-looking and green. If there isn't sufficient rain, take matters into your own hands with a sprinkler or hose. Test to see if your lawn is too dry: dig down 4 to 6 inches into the soil. If it's dry all the way down, it's time to start watering.

- In the summer heat, your lawn may turn brown. Despite common beliefs, you can actually leave off watering--wait for the autumn rains. Take a break from mowing, too. Grass goes into dormancy when its leaves dry out. But after a rejuvenating soak from Mother Nature or the sprinkler, it'll bounce back quickly.

Just add water...

- Water lightly and evenly. If you have a sprinkler, this will be taken care of for you. But if you use a hose, be careful not to flood a section of your yard. Watering quickly and heavily will not water the lawn properly. It only creates runoff and wastes a lot of water.

- Mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulching also helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water.

Finish up

- Knowing when to stop is the key to saving water. Use a garden spade to check how far the water has penetrated into the soil. When your lawn is wet to a depth of 6 inches, that's plenty.

OUTDOOR WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

- Don't water your street, driveway or sidewalk. Position your sprinklers so that your water lands on the lawn and shrubs - not the paved areas.

- Install sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of water-efficient methods of irrigation.

- Regularly check sprinkler systems and timing devices to be sure they are operating properly.

- Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely-clipped lawn.

- Avoid over fertilizing your lawn. The application of fertilizers increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers which contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.

- Do not hose down your driveway or sidewalk. Use a broom to clean leaves and other debris from these areas. Using a hose to clean a driveway can waste hundreds of gallons of water.

- Outfit your hose with a shut-off nozzle, which can be adjusted down to fine spray so that water flows only as needed. When finished, "turn it off" at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.

- Check all hoses, connectors and spigots regularly.

- Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your own car, park on the grass to do so.

- If you have a swimming pool, consider a new water-saving pool filter. A single back flushing with a traditional filter uses from 180 to 250 gallons or more of water.

- Use a broom or rake instead of water to remove leaves, clippings and debris from driveways and walkways.

- Lower the water level in the pool to minimize splashing. When not in use, cover to slow evaporation.

- Use mulch in the garden and around shrubs to save moisture.

WATER CONSERVATION INDOORS

- Water usage varies from person to person and community to community but on average Americans use 183 gallons of water a day for cooking, washing, flushing, and watering purposes. The average family turns on the tap between 70 and 100 times daily. About 74% of home water usage is in the bathroom, about 21% is for laundry and cleaning, and about 5% is in the kitchen.

- Keep showers down to five minutes or less. This will save 75 gallons of water a week per person. Showering and bathing is one of the largest users (27%) of water domestically.

- Repair all leaky faucets, fixtures, and pipes both inside and outside the home to save up to 150 gallons of water per week, per leak. (Read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter doesn't read exactly the same, there is a leak.)

- Save 35 gallons of water a week per person by simply not letting the water run while brushing your teeth.

- Never use the toilet as a wastebasket. Flushing the toilet requires 2 to 7 gallons of water.

- A leaky toilet can waste more than 20,000 gallons of water a year. Try the toilet leak test: Take the lid off your toilet tank and drop a couple of food coloring drops into the tank. Wait ten minutes. If you have a leak, the bowl will change colors. It may be a bad flapper that can be replaced inexpensively.

- Running the dishwasher only when you have a full load will save 30 gallons of water a week. It takes 12 to 20 gallons of water to run an automatic dishwasher for one cycle.

- Don't wash less than a full load of laundry. This can save as much as 100 gallons of water a week. The average clothes washer uses about 50 gallons of water per load.

- Instead of running the faucet to get a cold drink, keep a container of water in the refrigerator. This tip saves from 2 to 5 gallons of water a week.

- Rinse vegetables and fruit in a sink or pan filled with water instead of under running water.

- Install aerators in faucets and flow restrictors in showerheads.