

## Outdoor Conservation Tips

There are lots of ways to save water, but reducing the water you use outdoors can make the biggest difference of all. By making a few easy changes to the way we use water outside our homes – like watering lawns only when needed, adjusting sprinklers to avoid watering sidewalks and using a broom instead of a hose – you can save a significant amount of water every day. The tips below are courtesy of the [Association of California Water Agencies](#)

- Next time you add or replace a flower or shrub, choose a low water use plant for year-round landscape color and save up to 550 gallons each year.
- Consider installing a weather-based irrigation controller to prevent overwatering your landscape.
- Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed.
- Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street
- Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground covers appropriate to your site and region.
- Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips. If installing a lawn, select a turf mix or blend that matches your climate and site conditions
- Plant in the fall when conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful
- Water your lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation
- Spreading a layer of organic mulch around plants retains moisture and saves water, time and money
- If water runs off your lawn easily, split your watering time into shorter periods to allow for better absorption.
- Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds soil moisture better than if it is closely clipped
- When cleaning out fish tanks, give the nutrient-rich water to your plants.
- Use sprinklers for large areas of grass. Water small patches by hand to avoid waste
- Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.
- Remember to check your sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the sprinkler heads in good shape.
- Don't water your lawn on windy days when most of the water blows away or evaporates.

- Water your plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance
- Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid overwatering some while underwatering others.
- Use a layer of organic material on the surface of your planting beds to minimize weed growth that competes for water.
- Learn how to shut off your automatic watering system in case it malfunctions or you get an unexpected rain.
- Direct water from rain gutters and HVAC systems toward water-loving plants in the landscape for automatic water savings.
- Water only when necessary. More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering
- Aerate your lawn at least once a year so water can reach the roots rather than run off the surface