Summary Water Tips

Lawns

1. Water before 10 a.m. to prevent evaporation which occurs during the hottest part of the day. Morning is better than evening, when the dampness encourages growth of fungus.
2. Water only when grass shows signs of wilt. Grass that springs back when stepped on does not need water.
3. Water long enough to soak the roots. A light sprinkling evaporates quickly and encourages shallow root systems.
4. Don't let the sprinkler run any longer than necessary. In an hour, 600 gallons can be wasted.
5. Allow an inch of water per week on your lawn. To measure, place cake tins outside to collect rain and water from sprinklers.
6. Aerate lawns by punching holes 6 inches apart. This allows water to reach roots rather than run off surfaces.
7. Mow Kentucky bluegrass at least 21/2" to 3" high to hold moisture.
8. Position sprinklers to water the lawn, not the pavement.
9. Avoid watering on windy days when the wind not only blows water off target, but also causes excess evaporation.
10. Adjust your hose to simulate a gentle rain. Sprinklers which produce a fine mist waste water through evaporation. Know how to turn off an automatic sprinkler system in case of rain.

Vegetable and Flower Gardens

1. Water deeply, slowly, and weekly. Most vegetables require moisture to a depth of six to eight inches.
2. Keep soil loose so water can penetrate easily.
3. Use mulch around plants and rows to hold in moisture.
4. Keep out weeds to reduce competition for water.
5. Put the water where you want it and avoid evaporation by using soil-soakers or slow-running hoses, not sprinklers.

Trees and Shrubs

1. Water deeply using a soil-soaker.
2. Water only when needed. Check the depth of soil dryness by digging with a trowel. While the surface may be dry, adequate moisture is retained beneath the surface for the support of trees and shrubs.
3. Mulch to reduce evaporation. A 2" to 3" layer of wood chips, pine needles, grass clippings, or straw keeps the soil cool in summer. Mulch adds landscape interest and reduces weeds. The few weeds that do grow are uprooted.
4. Dig troughs around plants to catch and retain water.
5. Water plants growing in full sun more often than those in shade.
6. Know how to turn off automatic sprinklers in case of rain.
7. Do not fertilize during the summer. Fertilizing increases a plant's need for water.
8. Postpone planting until spring or fall when there is generally less need for water.
9. Install trickle-drip irrigation systems close to the roots of your plants. By dripping water slowly, the system doesn't spray water into the air where it can be lost through evaporation.
10. Use rainwater caught in containers placed under downspouts. Use spring, stream, or creek water, if available.

Around the House

1. Use a bucket of soapy water and a sponge to wash your car. Save the hose for rinsing. Wash your car in sections and rinse with short spurts from the hose. Washing a car for 20 minutes with the hose running all the time uses 90 gallons.
2. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the faucet for cold water. (For real pampering, keep your glass in the refrigerator, too.)
3. Cover your backyard pool when not in use to prevent evaporation, accidents, and to keep it clean. Don't fill if full and keep splashes inside.
4. Tell your children not to play with water hoses and sprinklers.
5. Recycle wading pool water for plants, lawns and for bathing the dog.
6. Start a compost pile instead of using your garbage disposal, which uses a lot of water.
7. Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and sidewalks.
8. Clean garden produce in a tub of water, then recycle used water and give the plants in the garden a drink.

Gardening Water Tips

Over Watering:

Soil is constantly damp

Leaves turn a lighter shade of green or turn yellow.

Young shoots are wilted.

Leaves are green yet brittle.

Algae and mushrooms are growing.

Under-Watering:

Soil is dry.

Older leaves turn yellow or brown, and drop off.

Leaves are wilted.

Leaves curl.