

Watering Practices

How we water can make a big impact on the quantity of water we use. There are various ways that we can adjust our watering practices in order to conserve.

#1

WATER DEEPLY

Water plants slowly at the base, so the water is easily accessible to the roots. Deep, infrequent watering helps encourage a strong and robust root system.

#2

DON'T SPRAY

Spraying the foliage results in high evaporative loss and can encourage plant disease. Sprinklers should only be used for establishing new lawns.

#3

TIME MATTERS

Water during the early morning hours or later in the afternoon/evening, so more water will be absorbed by the soil. Water will be lost to evaporation if you water during the middle of the day when it is hot and sunny.

#4

DITCH THE HOSE

If feasible, look for alternatives to watering with a hose. Most water sprayed with a hose or a sprinkler does not get to the intended plants and a high percentage evaporates before getting into the soil/root zone.

Hose Alternatives

Drip Irrigation:

- Has emitters spaced at regular intervals that deliver a specific amount of water over time
- Good for areas with continual supplemental water needs, such as a vegetable garden
- Downside: more complex and expensive to install

Watering Can:

- Good for small areas or a few plants

Soaker Hose System:

- A hose made of semi-permeable material that leaks water slowly along entire length
- Good for short-term use, like watering a new planting
- Downside: cannot control amount of water emitted, and hose material has short life span



Rainwater Harvesting

Another way to conserve water in our landscapes is to use rainwater harvesting techniques to capture water during rain events to store for future use or allow it to infiltrate into the soil.



Rain Barrels

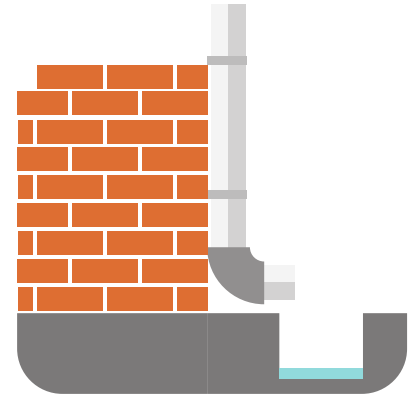
A rain barrel is a medium or large plastic drum connected to a gutter downspout, which allows it to collect and store water from rainfall. The barrel usually has a hose attached at the bottom so the stored water can be used for filling watering cans or watering gardens directly. In larger applications rainwater can be collected in underground cisterns and stored for later use.





Directed Downspouts

In addition to filling rain barrels, gutter downspouts can be useful for directing water to specific areas. Consider locating plants with high water needs in areas adjacent to where downspouts drain out or use grading and drainage to direct rainwater to more water intensive areas.



Swales and Berms

Swales are linear shallow depressions and berms are earthen mounds. Both can be effective features in the landscape to capture and direct rainwater that flows over the land surface. Planting water-loving species at the bottom of a swale or use a berm to capture and infiltrate water that would otherwise flow off your property.



Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are planting beds constructed in shallow depressions that capture and infiltrate rain water. Rain gardens can be a very interesting design element in the landscape and are great at helping with stormwater management. Plants in a rain garden should be adaptable and must be capable of dealing with inundation with water and prolonged drought.

Above all else, observe and study the characteristics of your property and educate yourself about plants. Monitor your garden and develop an understanding of the soil moisture levels in particular areas and the water necessity of different plants. Evaluate your landscape water usage and come up with a plan for how you can conserve.



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