



RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR WATER EFFICIENCY

In the U.S., residential outdoor water use accounts for nearly 8 billion gallons of water each day. During the summer, watering lawns and gardens can more than double a normal Ohio household's water usage. Up to 50% of water used for irrigation is wasted due to evaporation, wind, or overwatering. Outdoor water conservation is a useful tool in protecting Ohio's greatest resource. Making a commitment to outdoor water conservation while caring for your landscaping is easy for you and your family to do today – and saves you money!

MANAGE TURFGRASS STRATEGICALLY

Turfgrass receives the highest percentage of irrigation water in traditional landscaping, and many homeowners water their grass too often and for too long. To promote a healthier lawn and reduce water consumption, follow these tips:

- **STEP ON IT:** step on the lawn, and if grass springs back, it doesn't need water.
- **LEAVE IT LONG:** Raise the mower blade to keep grass at least 3" tall to promote deeper root growth. Taller grass is more drought-resistant and reduces evaporation and weeds.
- **BROWN IS OK:** during Ohio's dry summers, established grass can go dormant and turn brown. Grass only needs rain or watering once a month and the brown areas will bounce back in the fall.
- Plant turfgrass only where it has a practical function, such as a play area, and choose a type that don't use a lot of water and can withstand drought.
- If you must water, do it wisely:
 - Only water 1" each week if rainfall isn't sufficient.
 - Irrigate with soil, plants, and weather conditions in mind - rather than a fixed schedule - improves watering efficiency and promotes strong root growth and healthier plants.
 - Water morning or evening to reduce evaporation from sun and wind and to maximize the amount of water that reaches the plant roots.

ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR WATER SAVING TIPS

- Collect rainfall for irrigation in rain barrels or cisterns. Cover collection containers to prevent animals and children from entering and eliminate mosquito breeding.
- If using an irrigation system, install WaterSense® labeled irrigation technology to save water, time, and money. An irrigation professional can design, install, and maintain your system to ensure efficiency.
- Always use a broom to clean walkways, driveways, and porches, rather than hosing off these areas. Be sure to use non-toxic, biodegradable detergent.
- When washing a car, wet it quickly, then use a bucket of water to wash the car. Turn off running water while washing.
- Limit the frequency of pool refilling by covering the pool, checking regularly for leaks, and lowering the water level to reduce losses from splashing.



An Ohio yard with native landscaping instead of turfgrass.

CONVERT TO A WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE

Native plants are adapted to local conditions, so they require little water beyond normal rainfall once established and rarely require fertilizer or pesticides. For areas where turfgrass isn't necessary, plant native woody and herbaceous plants to provide structural interest and wildlife habitat to your yard, while significantly reducing water use and time spent on mowing and irrigating. For a beautiful water-efficient landscape, follow these tips:

- Plan before you plant to increase success. Consider climate, topography, sunlight requirements, and water needs.
- Add compost or organic matter to soil to improve soil conditions and water retention.
- Use mulch in landscaping beds to reduce evaporation, control weeds, and boost plant growth.
- Water and fertilize plants only as needed during establishment. Too much water and fertilizer can cause weak growth and possibly encourage diseases. As the landscape matures, maintenance and irrigation will be less frequent.
- Water slowly to ensure that water reaches the plant roots.

ODNR CONTACT INFORMATION AND OTHER LINKS

[ODNR Division of Water Resources Water Conservation webpages:](https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/water-resources/water-conservation)

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/water-resources/water-conservation>

Contact us! Water Inventory and Planning Program | Phone: 614-265-6736 | Email: wipp@dnr.ohio.gov

[US EPA Water-Smart Landscapes brochure](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-01/documents/ws-outdoor-water-efficient-landscaping.pdf)

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-01/documents/ws-outdoor-water-efficient-landscaping.pdf>

[US EPA WaterSense® Outdoors:](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors)

<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors>

SCAN FOR ODNR WATER CONSERVATION
WEBPAGES & LINKS

