

Outdoor Water Saving Tips

The majority of Truckee's summertime water use occurs in our landscapes. Here are tips for saving water and minimizing water waste outside your home.

MULCH, MULCH, MULCH! Organic mulch is the best natural way to improve your soil and decrease watering by preserving moisture. It acts as sun-screen, a windbreaker, a weed deterrent and provides food. Two to three inches of mulch is recommended.

Make trees a top priority for irrigation. While lawns & flowers are easily replaced, large trees take decades to become established. Reduced irrigation for your lawns & shrubs, may not provide enough water to the deep roots of your trees.

What is the **best way to water**? Low and slow. Low volumes of water over a long period of time gets the water deep into the soil where it is less apt to evaporate and will encourage the plants' deeper roots. An automatic irrigation system with drip irrigation or, for overhead watering, multi-stream, multi-trajectory nozzles and pressure regulation will provide the most efficient use of water for irrigation.

Use the **Cycle and Soak** method to minimize irrigation run-off and encourage deeper root growth. How does this work? If you normally irrigate with one 30-minute cycle, then set your controller to water in three shorter segments of 10-minutes each with 30-minutes between segments. Some irrigation controllers even have a cycle and soak program setting.

Check your sprinklers each month for water-wasting problems and make repairs. These include sprinklers that are broken, leaking, tilted, clogged, spraying the sidewalk, fence or wall and misting versus spraying from too much pressure. Also check drip systems for missing or broken emitters. Maintaining the system in good working order will save water and keep the landscape looking good.

Leave Grass Long. When mowing your lawn, set the mower blade to a cut height of 3 to 4 inches. This reduces moisture loss and encourages a deeper root system making the lawn less susceptible to drought and pests. It also suppresses weeds by blocking their sun.

Select the right plants. Take note of plants in your local landscapes that receive little or no water except from rain, these are often well adapted to low water conditions. Plants with gray or silver foliage are often more drought tolerant.

For more outdoor conservation ideas visit the **TDPUD Conservation Garden**, 11570 Donner Pass Rd, Truckee, CA.

Visit www.tdpud.org for additional water conservation tips and program information.

