



# WaterWise Weekly

June 29 2009

## WaterWise Lawn Irrigation

You can have a healthy lawn while conserving water, if you know how to irrigate wisely. Here are some tips for maintaining your lawn *and* saving water!

- Only water in the mornings and evenings, ideally before 8 am or after 7 pm. Watering during the day uses the most water, due to the high rate of evaporation resulting from high temperatures and wind and produces less desirable results.
- Only give your grass the amount of moisture it needs. Most lawns only need 1 inch or less of water or rain per week. To find out how long or how much you need to water your lawn, place a small tuna or cat food can on your lawn while watering. When the can is filled, you've given your lawn the right amount of water for the week! Over-watering your lawn can actually be harmful as it encourages a shallow root system, as well as disease. How do you know if you are over-watering? Some signs of over-watering include water running off of your lawn into the street, and "squishy" spots.



Calibrated plastic cup for catch can test

- Raise up your lawn-mower. Allowing your grass to grow to 2-4 inches encourages a deeper root system. Lawns and plants with deep root systems are more tolerant of environmental stress such as drought and cold, and require less watering.
- Aerate your lawn to increase infiltration (the ability of water to soak into the ground) and reduce the amount of watering needed.

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**Irrigation Users:  
Adjust your system to  
apply at 90% of your  
full cycle time**

Click [HERE](#) for a sample irrigation schedule

### Sprinkling Restrictions:

Remember, from May 1 - September 30, use of the city water supply system for lawn and garden sprinkling, irrigation, car washing, or other non-potable uses is limited to an odd/even schedule corresponding to your property address. If your address ends in an even number, you may sprinkle on even days of the month. If your address ends in an odd number, you may sprinkle on odds days of the month.

### Monthly Drawing! June Prize

Carver County  
Annual Park Pass  
Winner: The  
Lancette Family!



## **WaterWise Lawn Irrigation, continued**

- Consider adding in or planting lawns with a no-mow or fescue seed mix. These grass seed mixes require less maintenance, including watering, mowing, and fertilizer application.
- If you have an irrigation system, contact an irrigation professional to come to your home to perform an irrigation audit. The majority of homeowners with irrigation systems have inefficient systems and watering schedules, and are unaware and/or unable to adjust them. An irrigation professional can adjust your system so your lawn is receiving the amount of water it needs while reducing water loss. For a list of irrigation professionals that are certified to implement water efficiency best practices, go to: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>.
- If you have an irrigation system, look for inefficiencies such as broken spray heads, sprayers that throw over hard surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks or other areas that do not need to be irrigated, and objects that deflect spray such as trees and shrubs. Repair or adjust your system to remedy these problems, or call an irrigation professional.
- Install a smart controller on your irrigation system. A typical 1/3 acre landscape with a conventional irrigation system scheduled to run every other day for 15 minutes uses 10,000 gallons of water per week. By using “smart” controllers, converting shrub and flower beds to drip irrigation, and properly regulating water pressure, at least a 25% water savings can be realized. That’s 2,500 gallons per week.
- Adjust watering zones in your irrigation system by light, elevation and soil conditions. Shady, low-lying areas need less watering than dry, hilly areas. Also consider soil conditions. Most soil in Chanhassen has a high clay content, and when compacted (as in most lawns) cannot absorb water very fast. Runtimes over 15 minutes for sprays and 20 minutes for rotors should be divided into two cycles so that the water can soak in rather than run off.

### **Resources:**

- **Compost is available at the Carver County Environmental Center for \$1/bucket. Visit [www.co.carver.mn.us](http://www.co.carver.mn.us)**
- **Click [HERE](#) for more WaterWise Irrigation tips**

*"Water efficiency is the best way to ensure safe and reliable drinking water supplies, while also saving consumers money on utility bills... The public will embrace the opportunity to choose products that protect our drinking water supplies, save money, and provide water to our treasured rivers, lakes and streams..."*

*Ronnie Cohen, Senior Policy Analyst Natural Resources Defense Council*

## **Learning Opportunities & Events**

### **Money-Saving Solutions for Your Landscape Irrigation System**

**July 11, 9-11 am**

**Presenter: Craig Otto**

**Irrigation Consultants & Control**

**\$20 class fee**

**Chanhassen residents**

**& Arboretum members,**

**\$30 non-members**

**Call 952-443-1400 to register**

Discover how you can help save money and conserve life-supporting water -- an increasingly scarce resource, even in Minnesota. The EPA estimates that landscape irrigation systems waste 50 percent of the water they apply due to wind, evaporation, and improper system design, installation, or maintenance. Many solutions that reduce irrigation water usage are simple and easy. Others require initial investments that quickly pay for themselves. As the class covers these solutions, students will learn how soil, plants and the environment interact to create or temper water demand. The class also will review emerging technologies that can reduce water waste and enhance irrigation efficiency.

**Summer Exhibition**

**“Waterosity:**

**Go Green with a Splash”**

**June 6-October 4**

**Minnesota Landscape Arboretum**

