



*A stunning example of a xeric landscape*

### It's Easy Being Green

Colorado's drought has forced homeowners to keep their yards alive under severe weather conditions. It is possible to conserve water and have healthy trees, lawns and gardens.

The following simple tips help you save water, and preserve the beauty and value of your landscape.

It is important to check with your local water supplier for specific restrictions.

### Still have questions? Ask a professional.

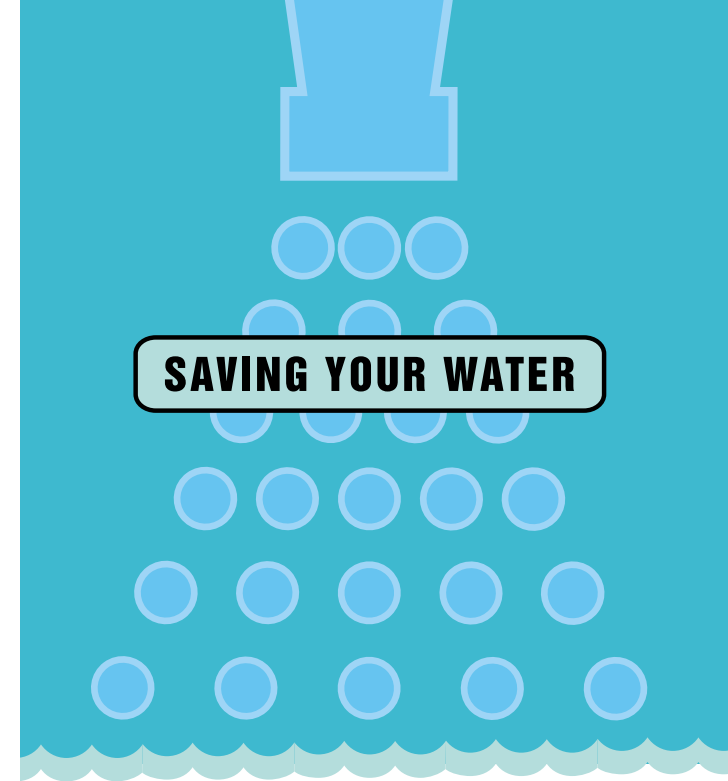
For more information about water conservation or to find a qualified professional in your area:

Green Industries of Colorado (GreenCO)  
[www.greenco.org](http://www.greenco.org)

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension at  
[www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu)

### Green Industries of Colorado members:

- Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado (ALCC)
- Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals (CALCP)
- Colorado Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects (CCASLA)
- Colorado Greenhouse Growers Association (CGGA)
- Colorado Nursery Association (CNA)
- Garden Centers of Colorado (GCC)
- Rocky Mountain Chapter of International Society of Arboriculture (RMC-ISA)
- Rocky Mountain Sod Growers Association (RMSGa)
- Wholesale Florists of Colorado (WFC)



## A Guide to Water Conservation for Yards and Gardens

Brought to you by:

The Green Industries of Colorado (GreenCO)  
and Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

## How to Use Water Wisely and Efficiently

Water lawns and planting beds according to their needs. Check soil moisture before watering. Insert a 6-inch screwdriver into the soil; if it can be easily inserted, you don't need to water.

**Water at night.** Water at night (10 p.m. - 6 a.m.) not during the heat of the day or when the wind is blowing. Set your sprinklers to hit the landscape only, not sidewalks, driveways, windows or other areas.

**Look for footprints.** Water when footprints or mower tracks become easily visible on the turf or when large areas of the lawn take on a bluish-gray color.

**Has it rained?** Skip watering on days following 1/2 inch or more of rain. On cool, cloudy days plants use less water and there is less evaporation. This extends the time needed between watering.

**Update your sprinkler system.** Consider upgrading or installing drip irrigation or under-ground watering systems to limit evaporation and to apply water to plants' roots more efficiently. Design or redesign your yard to include separate watering zones for trees, flowerbeds, gardens and lawns.

**Check your sprinkler system.** Check to see how long each zone is scheduled to run and adjust the timer. A shade zone will require less water than a hot, sunny area and the cooler seasons require less water than the hot summer months. Check sprinkler heads frequently to make sure that they are functioning properly. Also, if you have an older timer, you may want to make sure it meets your local watering restrictions. Learn how to operate your sprinkler system and consider installing timer upgrades.

**Watering with a hose?** Use household timers to remind you to move or stop soaker hoses and sprinklers, and check your sprinklers to see how much water they put out. (This is easily done by placing a shallow container like a cat food or tuna fish can in the yard to measure water.) This will help determine how long you should water.

## Tips for Lawns

**Aerate.** Aeration is an important part of healthy lawn maintenance, because it relieves soil compaction and allows better water, air and fertilizer penetration. The result is less water run-off and better plant health. Aerate under moderate moisture conditions for best results.

**Mow efficiently.** Set your mower at the highest level possible and make sure the blade is sharp so it will cut blades of grass properly. Leave clippings on the lawn to recycle nutrients back into the soil.

**Brown spots?** Be willing to accept a less-than-perfect lawn. Respond to brown spots by hand watering. Check the coverage of the sprinklers, and frequently look for broken lines or heads, clogged nozzles resulting in poor spray patterns, and improperly adjusted heads/nozzles.

**Fertilize.** Consider applying iron fertilizers moderately. Reduce nitrogen application rates. Lush, fast-growing grass uses more water. Fertilize in summer with a slow-release fertilizer and in the fall at the rate suggested on the product label.

## Tips for Flower Gardens

Flower gardens may need less water than grass areas. Adjust your watering method to these areas.

**Know their tolerance.** Select and plant flowers by their specific water and sunlight needs. Many low water-use flowers are available.

**Improve the soil.** Prepare your flowerbeds with soil amendments like peat moss, compost or other organic material for maximum water efficiency and growth.

**Newly planted flowers.** Check and water flowers daily for a short time during the first two weeks after planting to help them get established, and then gradually reduce watering. To determine if the flowers need water, insert a 6-inch screwdriver

into the soil; if it can be easily inserted, you don't need to water.

**Mulch.** Apply mulch to reduce evaporation, retain moisture in the soil and control weeds.

## Tips for Trees

Trees obtain water best when the water soaks into the soil, near the feeder roots to a depth of 12 inches.

**Established trees.** Roots extend out from the tree three-to-five times the height of the tree. Soaking the tree next to the trunk is not adequate. Normal, general landscape irrigation provides water for established trees.

**Newly planted trees.** Apply a 3-to-4 inch layer of mulch at a minimum of 2 feet wide around the trunk. Check moisture in the root ball and water to maintain adequate moisture.

**In the winter.** Water once or twice a month during dry, warm winter months. Deep-root watering is one of the best ways to water trees. Refer to Save Our Shade Brochure.

## Tips for Fruit and Vegetable Gardens

**Grapes, raspberries, strawberries and vegetables.** Use mulch around the plants and consider using a drip irrigation sprinkler system, as it's more efficient than overhead spraying.

**Apples, pears, plums, peaches, cherries and other fruit trees.** Water as described above for trees.

## Do you have a new landscape?

**Remember:** Establishing new plants and lawns may initially require more water. Be sure to adjust initial watering cycles to maintenance levels after the landscape is established. Mulch where possible to conserve moisture. See [www.greenco.org](http://www.greenco.org) for current information.