

## It's Valuable Being Green

**1. Quality landscaping improves your property value.** A well-maintained lawn can enhance “curb appeal” adding as much as 15 percent to the value of a home.<sup>1</sup> A landscaped patio, a hedge, as well as landscaped curbs adds 12.4 percent, 3.6 percent and 4.4 percent to the market value of a house respectively.<sup>2</sup> Prudential Real Estate estimates that more than half of all houses are sold before potential buyers even get out of their cars.<sup>3</sup>

**2. It is expensive to replace existing landscapes and takes more water to establish.** Replacing sod costs an average of \$1-1.50 per square foot, or \$1,500 for a 1,000- square-foot lawn.<sup>4</sup> The average size of a lawn along the Front Range is around 5,000 square feet – that could mean more than \$5,000 in replacement costs. Additionally, replacing sod will consume more water down the road than from maintaining the current landscape.

**3. Landscape improves air and water quality.** One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year, equaling 11,000 miles of car emissions.<sup>5</sup> A 50' x 50' lawn releases enough oxygen for a family of four to breathe.<sup>6</sup> A lawn also reduces carbon dioxide emissions, mitigates the heat island effect, reduces energy consumption and contributes to reducing global warming.<sup>7</sup>

**4. Landscape enhances energy efficiency.** Landscaping reduces air conditioning costs by up to 50 percent by shading the windows and walls of a home.<sup>8</sup> A single urban tree can provide up to \$273 a year in air conditioning, pollution fighting, erosion and storm water control, as well as wildlife shelter benefits.<sup>9</sup> Healthy front lawns of eight houses have the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning—enough for 16 average-sized homes.<sup>10</sup>

**5. The landscaping industry helps fuel Colorado's weakened economy.** Landscaping provides \$1.5 billion each year to Colorado's economy and contributes more than 25,000 jobs. The Green Industries of Colorado advocates equitable water conservation, shared by the indoor and outdoor home use, manufacturing, industry and agriculture to provide for water conservation that really works.

### 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 (RMSGGA)
- Wholesale Florists of Colorado (WFC)



## A Guide to Saving Water and Your Landscape Investment Year-Round

Brought to you by:

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





## It's Easy to Save Water

With Colorado in its worst drought in recorded history, it is critical that we all conserve water year-round. Conserving water indoors will help provide water for trees, gardens, flowers and lawns. “It’s easy being green” if we all do our fair share of being part of the solution. Just adding one or more conservation measures in your daily routine will save significant amounts of water. Here are some quick, easy ways you can do your part to save water:

### Indoors

- Place a plastic bottle filled with water, sand or stone into the toilet tank (avoid bricks), which lowers the water level and conserves water.
- Replace your toilet with an efficient 1.6-gallon per flush toilet.
- Limit flushing (“if it’s yellow, let it mellow; if it’s brown, flush it down”).
- Fill the bathtub with a limited amount of water. Reuse bath and shower water outdoors on your landscape (check with local health departments on various regulations).
- Recycle water that would otherwise go to waste. This might include putting a bucket in the shower to catch extra water, which can be used to water trees, shrubs, beds and containers.
- Install a water-efficient showerhead; take 3-5 minute showers instead of a bath.
- When brushing teeth, washing face, or shaving, use a glassful/bowl of water instead of running the tap.
- Check for water leaks on faucets, washers and toilets.
- Run only full loads of dishes in a dishwasher; wash only full loads of laundry.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill up the sink with soap and water instead of running the water the whole time.




*A stunning example of a xeric landscape*

- Keep cold water in the refrigerator, instead of running the tap until the water cools.
- Insulate your water pipes. You’ll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats up.
- Use fish tank water, cooking water, left over water in a water glass or pet bowl on plants.
- Defrost food in the refrigerator, not under running water.

### Outside

- Wash your car at a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- Shut down fountains and waterfalls.
- Use moisture sensors to determine when you should water your yard and plants (available in hardware stores).
- Don’t use water to clean walks and driveways.
- Leave the clippings on the lawn when you mow.
- Mulch shrub beds, tree wells with a wood-based mulch.
- Install a rain shutoff device on your automatic sprinkler system.
- Plant drought-resistant plants. Incorporate xeric landscape principles into your yard.

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- Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely-clipped lawn.
  - Spring/Fall – Fertilization and aeration of bluegrass and fescue lawns are recommended. Fertilization should include both quick and slow release forms of nitrogen. Whenever possible, fertilization should be followed up with 1/2 inch irrigation – unless rainfall occurs. If precipitation does not occur and watering can not be performed, the applied fertilizer will not harm the lawn – but nutrient release will be delayed until some form of moisture is received.
  - Summer – If bluegrass or fescue is mostly green, fertilize according to your normal fertilization program. If bluegrass or fescue is mostly brown and is not receiving water, reduce/eliminate nitrogen fertilization, possibly apply soil wetting agents. Do not aerate dormant/mostly brown lawns that are not receiving moisture during the hot summer months.
  - Consider drip irrigation systems around trees and shrubs.
  - Keep landscapes free of weeds, as weeds are water thieves and will rob your plants of water and nutrients.

### Sources:

- 1 Gallup Organization survey conducted on behalf of American Gardening Association
  - 2 Journal of Real Estate Research—Landscaping and House Values: An Empirical Investigation
  - 3 Prudential Real Estate
  - 4, 6, 11 Green Industries of Colorado (GreenCO)
  - 5 Virginia Polytechnic Institute Cooperative Extension
  - 7 United States Congress
  - 8 American Public Power Association
  - 9 American Forests
  - 10 Professional Lawn Care Association of America
- American Water and Energy Savers, Inc.
  - California Urban Water Conservation Council ([www.n2house.net](http://www.n2house.net))
  - North Beach Middle School Water Conservation ([www.geocities.com/RainForest/7575/#bath](http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/7575/#bath))