



Water conservation

Water is our most precious resource; however, it is often taken for granted.

Although Minnesota appears to have a more than adequate supply of water, increasing demand from domestic, agricultural, and industrial water users can strain water resources and municipal water supply systems, especially during periods of drought.

Water conservation can reduce the demand placed upon ground and surface water sources and municipal water supply systems. Conservation can save water users money by reducing water bills, or reducing electrical consumption and maintenance costs for private well owners. Municipalities can reduce water and sewage treatment costs and delay or eliminate expensive infrastructure improvements which would save tax payers money.

Lawn and garden watering

Many conventional lawns in Minnesota can stay healthy if they receive 1-1.5 inches of water a week, either through precipitation or irrigation. Deep infrequent watering is generally better for lawns and plants than frequent lighter irrigations, which can cause shallow roots. **No need to water when there is rain.**

Interesting fact: “For every 1% that you increase your soil’s organic matter, you increase the water absorption capacity by 16,000 gallons of plant-available water per acre, down to one foot deep” (EPA).

Watering tips

- Water early in the morning to minimize evaporation.
- Never water faster than the ground can absorb the water.
- Know your soil and its watering needs.
- Next time you water, place 3 to 5 empty tuna or cat food cans at varied distances from the sprinkler
- The time it takes to fill the cans is about how long you should water your lawn (This should take only 15 to 30 minutes).
- Adjust automatic irrigation schedules at least monthly to ensure water use efficiency.
- Step on the grass; if it springs back up when you move your foot, it does not need water.
- Arrange plants in your garden by light and watering needs.
- Consider drip irrigation systems around trees and shrubs (drip systems permit water to flow slowly to roots, encouraging strong root systems; these systems will also cut down evaporation).
- Adjust sprinklers to avoid watering sidewalks and driveways.
- Collect rain water in a rain barrel for watering your lawn and plants.
- Cut grass no shorter than 2 inches to reduce evaporation and promote deep root growth.
- Use shut-off nozzles on hoses.
- Aerate your lawn as needed.
- When hiring an irrigator, look for a **certified landscape irrigation professional**.

Car washing

If you use a hose to wash your car, be sure to use a hose nozzle or turn the water off when you are not using the water. Washing a car for 20 minutes can use up to 100 gallons of water if you let the water run the entire time.

Tips

- Use a bucket of water and use the hose only for quick rinses.
- Wash your car and other items (bicycles and trash cans) on the lawn to prevent the water from running down the storm drain