

Tips on Saving Water in Your Garden

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Being residents of Southern California, we all know that water is one of our most valuable natural resources. In fact, more than half of the water used in homes is on landscapes, according to Jason Foster, Director of Public Outreach and Conservation at the San Diego County Water Authority.

Although we have come a long way over the past 20 years in improving our regional water supply, Maureen Stapleton, General Manager of the San Diego Water Authority says “Water conservation and water use efficiency will always be an essential part of our region – and they are especially critical when (we are) in drought.”

At the San Diego County Water Authority, we have come up with the following tips to help you to save water in your garden. Making your garden more water efficient doesn't need to break your budget. Especially when many no- and low-cost actions, like the ones we've listed below, can really save you a lot of water (and expensive water bills!) in the long run.

Water Saving Tips:

Repair irrigation line leaks and broken sprinkler heads.

- You can save up to 10 gallons per minute per leak.

Adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray and runoff.

- You can save up to 15 to 25 gallons per day.

Don't overwater.

(1) Reduce each irrigation cycle by 1 to 3 minutes or eliminate one irrigation cycle per week. Use a landscape calculator or watering index to learn how much water different parts of your yard require.

- You can save up to 25 gallons per minute.

(2) Water only when the top inch of soil is dry.

(3) Replace batteries in your irrigation controller each spring and fall, and adjust your programming based on the season.

- You can save 15 to 25 gallons for each minute or up to 250 gallons per cycle.

Use a hose nozzle that shuts off when you release the handle.

- You can save up to 18 gallons per minute.

Water in the late evening or early morning to reduce evaporation and interference from wind.

- You can save 20 to 25 gallons per day.

Apply a 3-inch layer of mulch over planting areas, keeping the mulch 6 inches away from plant stems and tree trunks to avoid mildew.

- You can save 20 to 30 gallons per day per 1,000 sq. ft.



Mediterranean Garden at SDBG

Install drip irrigation systems for trees, shrubs and flowers to get water to plant roots more efficiently.

- You can save 20 to 25 gallons per day.

Turn off your irrigation 1 to 3 days before it's expected to rain.

Turn it back on when your soil is dry.

- This can save you hundreds or potentially thousands of gallons of water.

Upgrade to a “smart” irrigation controller that automatically adjusts watering times for hotter weather and stops watering when it rains.

- You can save 40 gallons per irrigation cycle.

Replace a portion of lawn with native or Mediterranean plants. These plants do best when planted after winter rains begin.

- You can save 33 to 60 gallons per day per 1,000 sq. ft.

Control weeds that compete for water

Harvest Rainwater

Sign up for one of the WaterSmart Landscape Makeover Workshops at the San Diego Botanic Garden. For more information see page 6.

Check out WaterSmartSD.org for how-to resources, rebates and inspiration for living WaterSmart.