



## CONSERVATION CORNER



# Conserving Water in Your Garden and Landscaping

Over the last year, thanks to a combination of lockdown due to COVID-19, teleworking and the arrival of nicer weather, there has been a large uptick in home gardening. Since spring is officially here and Oregon is finally starting to see nicer weather, the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) wanted to remind everyone of some tips to conserve water in your garden, lawn and landscaping.

- Plant native plants that are perennials and drought tolerant and consider xeriscaping to help reduce fire risk to your home.
- Install drip irrigation instead of watering with a garden hose or a sprinkler system. Not only does it prevent disease in your plants by minimizing water contact with leaves and stems, but it saves water because there is less evaporation as the water is distributed.
- Harvest rainwater by collecting it off an impervious surface like your roof into rain barrels for watering your garden and landscaping.
- Add mulch to landscaping to prevent moisture from evaporating especially during dry spells.
- Water your garden and lawn early in the morning or late at night to reduce evaporation.
- Recycle household water. For example, that cold water that runs out when waiting for the water to heat up can be captured and used to water container plants.
- Move your mower blade up one notch and allow your grass to grow a little higher than you normally would. Longer blades of grass lead to less water wasted through evaporation.



Photo courtesy OWRD

Replace grass around trees with mulch, wood chips or gravel.

- Plant your garden in small blocks instead of long rows for easier watering and greater efficiency.
- If you're resurfacing your patio or driveway, consider using permeable building materials such as paver blocks, and pervious concrete. This allows infiltration of stormwater runoff and can filter out pollutants that contribute to water pollution.
- Add compost to your garden soil to help retain water (thereby reducing watering needs) and bonus—it helps improve drainage in clay soils.
- Be sure to check your garden hose for leaks and replace washers on a regular basis to prevent leaks before they can happen.





Install drip irrigation to save water and prevent disease in your plants.

This is of particular importance if you store your garden hose outside during the winter.

- When planting your garden, be sure to group plants by water needs. This will make watering far more efficient.
- Install a water timer—look for one with a soil moisture sensor that detects how wet the soil is and prevents overwatering.
- Reuse greywater (water from showers, washing machines, etc.) for watering landscape plants. Household soaps and detergents are harmless to plants (be sure NOT to use water containing bleach or disinfectants).
- Reuse your cooking water—if you steam or boil vegetables, pasta, etc. save the water! It is full of nutrients and makes for great fertilizer for your plants (be sure to let it cool overnight first).
- If you have a fish tank, don't throw that water out when you clean the tank and change out the water. It's full of "old" nitrogen and phosphorous which are great for plants.
- Resist the urge to wash down driveways, walkways and patios. Instead get some exercise by sweeping them off.
- Replace grass around tree trunks. The grass growing under a tree is competing with the tree for nutrients and water. Instead, replace the grass around trees with mulch, wood chips, or gravel.
- Trim your trees on a regular basis, especially the unnecessary lower branches—not only does this create a more structurally appealing tree by lifting the eye up to the canopy but with fewer branches and leaves there is less moisture loss (this is also great for fruit trees as it makes for a better harvest).

For other questions related to OWRD's water-conservation programs, please contact Kerri Cope at [Kerri.H.Cope@oregon.gov](mailto:Kerri.H.Cope@oregon.gov) or 503-979-9544. ■

## RESOURCES FOR RE-OPENING SAFELY



Oregon Cooperative Procurement Program (OrCPP) members have access to products on statewide price agreement to help you re-open safely.

**Are you a member?**

[Click here to check](#)

View our list of COVID related supplies currently on price agreement



Contact us at [info.orcpp@oregon.gov](mailto:info.orcpp@oregon.gov)