WATERING GUAGE

Hi, I'm Steve with the Regional Water Providers Consortium. Did you know that overwatering is the most common problem in the residential landscape? Or that outdoor watering can cause water use to double or triple during the summer months. This is because people just don't know how much water their landscape actually needs. And it's one reason why irrigation, whether you're talking about a single sprinkler or a sophisticated underground system is key to watering efficiently.

As a general rule of thumb shrubs, trees, and perennials require about 50% less water than lawns, while vegetables require about 25% less. However, once established they may need little to no weekly watering. So it's best to check with your local garden center or landscape professional to determine their specific water needs.

Once you indentify what you're watering, your next step is to measure your sprinkler's output. This will help you figure out how much watering time you will need to factor into your weekly watering schedule.

To do this place two watering gauges like these, at two different places within your sprinklers spray range. Gauges are available through the consortium and its member agencies or you can use a couple of tuna cans and a ruler. Run the sprinkler for 15 minutes and then average the amount in inches of water collected in the gauges. To find the average, measure the amount of water in each gauge and then add the amounts together and divide by two. This gives you the average amount of water your sprinkler distributes in a 15 minute period. If you're interested in more accurate results you can repeat these steps a few additional times, placing the gauges at different distances from your sprinkler.

Once you know your sprinkler's output over a 15 minute period, you can use this chart which is also available on our website to see how much time it will take you to water your landscape. For example, if your sprinkler's output after 15 minutes is an average of ½ inch then you know that you will need to water your lawn a total of 30 minutes per week to get the recommended 1 inch. And once you know your sprinkler's output you can also use this chart to adjust the amount you water other plants in your landscape.

So using our previous example, established shrubs, trees, and perennials will need a total of about ½ inch of water per week.

I hope this has given you some tools to start watering your landscape more efficiently. You can find all this information and more on our website at: ConserveH2O.org.

The instructional videos listed on our website are general guidelines. The Regional Water Providers Consortium will not be responsible for any damage to your home, landscape, or appliances from following the procedures in these videos. If you have concerns doing any of this work yourself, you may wish to seek the services of a professional plumber or contractor.

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