

On average, outdoor water use in the Oceanside area triples during the summer months.

Most of this excess water is used for outdoor irrigation, mainly to keep lawns green.

However, a large portion of this water is also wasted through improper irrigation practices.

While automated systems are one of the easiest, low maintenance options, they need to be checked and updated regularly to keep them from becoming water wasters.

Systems should be checked once a month to ensure maximum efficiency. Remember, your lawn only needs 1 inch of water a week.

Whatever type of watering system that you have, manual or automatic, remember to use it wisely.

Check your system for leaks

A leaking irrigation system is the leading outdoor water waster.

Irrigation pipes are made of brittle plastic which cracks easily due to weather conditions and natural earth movement. The most typical place for the piping to crack is at the joints.

When installing a new irrigation system, obtain several bids. Understand why each bid costs what it does. The cheaper options may be missing important mechanical devices such as a pressure flow regulator or a backflow prevention device.

For more information on what to look for, proper irrigation techniques and a water scheduling calculator, visit the Irrigation Association of British Columbia's website at: www.irrigationbc.com



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Town of Qualicum Beach



Efficient Irrigation and Useful Watering Tips



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Working Towards a Sustainable Future

Existing Systems

Make Them More Effective

Outdoor watering systems do not need to use excess water. The reason that most automated watering systems waste water is because of improper management.

Different Pressure

An ideal irrigation system will have uniform pressure between all zones. However, over time, added or adjusted spray heads may cause a drop in pressure, resulting in poor water coverage. A pressure gauge, available for about \$10 at local irrigation supply stores, can be used to tell how much pressure each head and zone is emitting. Simple changes like replacing the emitter on the spray head can solve the problem inexpensively.

Cleaning

Over time, sediments in the water can build up and block emitters. Every few years, remove the heads and clean out excess build up to keep your system performing up to standard.

Scheduling

Water needs change with the seasons. Programming your watering system allows you to account for seasonal changes in weather patterns and summer watering restrictions.

Watering What You Want

There is no point in watering the driveway or other paved surfaces. Each month, watch your system run and make sure that all of the sprinkler heads are being directed where they are needed. Simple changes like redirecting or readjusting the spray head can prevent runoff or uneven watering.



New Systems

Extra Water Saving Features

If you are considering installing an irrigation system there are several inexpensive features that will save you money.

Rain Sensor

Rain sensors are an inexpensive addition to your irrigation system. They measure the amount of rainfall each week and shut off your irrigation system when the adequate amount has been received.

Different Zones

Your lawn, flower beds, and shrubs all need different amounts of water. Have your system designed with zones for each region. This will allow you to tailor your water use for specific plants and adapt it as they mature.

365 Day Programmer

Your lawn needs different amounts of water in the spring, summer and fall. A full year timer can be programmed with yearly temperatures and rain levels in mind.

Irrigation Tips

Water Use

Your lawn only needs 1 inch of water per week. Irrigation specialists agree that watering deeply and less often is the best way to promote a healthy lawn. An easy way to check if your lawn needs water is to walk across it - if you leave footprints, it is time to water.

Brown Patches

If there is an area of brown on your lawn, try hand watering that area for a few weeks. If the lawn bounces back, your irrigation system needs to be adjusted. If it stays brown, the problem is likely the result of disease, pests or animals and not a result of watering.



Watering in the morning or evening helps prevent evaporation, allowing more water to be used by your lawn.