



Drought Alert:

Water Efficient Practices for Saving Your Landscape

Texas Cooperative Extension
Texas A&M University System
College Station, Texas

Lawns Don't Waste Water, People Do!

In recent years, much attention and controversy has surrounded the water requirement of the lawn. Misinformation and hidden agendas have fueled this controversy; however, there are some well documented facts about the American lawn.

The lawn is an integral component of the landscape. The lawn is certainly the best recreational surface for children and athletes. The lawn has a tremendous mitigating effect on the environment, reducing heat loads, noise, and water and air pollution.

A lawn is second only to a virgin forest in the ability to harvest water and recharge groundwater resources. As a design component, the lawn provides landscape unity and simplicity while inviting participation in the landscape.

The lawn has become a focus in reducing landscape water use because of the tremendous opportunity for abusive use of irrigation water in an effort of maintaining the lawn. Within the traditional landscape, the lawn has received the major portion of the total landscape irrigation. Lawn irrigation can be reduced, while the homeowner continues to derive the many benefits of turfgrass.

Lawns Don't Waste Water, People Do! --- can't

Specific strategies to reduce lawn irrigation include:

Place lawn areas into landscape irrigation zones based on water requirements, so that lawns can be watered separately from other landscape plantings

Select adapted, lower-water demand turf species and varieties

Use irrigated lawn areas only in areas which provide function (i.e., recreational, aesthetic, food traffic, dust and noise abatement, glare reduction, temperature mitigation)

Use non-irrigated lawn areas where appropriate

Irrigate properly based on the lawn's true water needs

Increase mowing heights to decrease lawn water use and stress

Decrease fertilizer rates and properly schedule fertilizations

By implementing these strategies, homeowners can reduce lawn irrigation requirements and still reap the many benefits of a cool, green lawn.

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