

Water Conservation Doesn't Mean Doing Without, but Doing the Same with Less

While nature's capacity to produce water seems limitless, the Lincoln Water System's (LWS) ability to deliver water to your home is not. In fact, the water you use is a carefully produced quality product which is clean and safe. Your water is piped directly to your home through an elaborate delivery system. During the summer when water use increases, LWS can deliver 80-90 million gallons a day. When water use approaches or exceeds this level, individual water conservation decisions become important.



BE WATER WISE OUTDOORS

Why Conserve?

Wise use of water is a good idea for many reasons. On a grand scale, it protects our environment and preserves this precious natural resource. On a personal level, it saves you money by reducing your water bill. As a community, water conservation will lengthen the life of Lincoln's water delivery system because less stress is placed on the system.

Lincoln's Water Conservation Task Force has produced many brochures on how you can become water wise. Join the task force in making Lincoln a water wise community.

Other Brochures

- Low Water-Use Tolerant Plants for Lincoln, Nebraska
- Why Conserve?
- Wise Ways to Save Water Indoors

Special Thanks to:

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WISE WAYS to Water Your Lawn



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WAYS TO CONSERVE WATER IN YOUR LAWN

Over half the water we use in the summer goes to water our lawns and other thirsty plants. By watering efficiently in the landscape, you can help to keep the city's water use within the system's capacity and also reduce your summertime water bill.

Lincoln's Water Conservation Task Force offers 12 practical ways to keep your lawn green and conserve water, too.

Water Early

Water during the cool part of the day, to reduce evaporation. The best time to water your lawn is early morning. Deep water shrubs in evening hours.

Adjust Your Watering Schedule

The amount of water your lawn requires varies from week to week and month to month. Lawns seldom need to be watered during April. In most instances, start watering in mid-May to early June.

Know Your Plant's Water Needs

Different plants and turf grasses require varying amounts of water. A healthy, growing bluegrass lawn will require about one-half inch of water per week in early May and one to two inches per week during the mid-summer months. Adjust watering to include rainfall.

Measure Sprinkler Output

Measure your sprinkler output by placing three or more cans in various locations throughout the sprinkler pattern. Turn on your sprinkler for fifteen minutes. The average depth of water in the cans will tell you how much water the sprinkler has applied.

Water Efficiently

Use a sprinkler that throws large drops of water close to the ground. Sprinklers which throw mist or small droplets of water high in the air, result in excessive evaporation. Traveling sprinklers are among the most efficient.

Check Your Sprinkler Coverage

Make sure your sprinkler waters just the lawn. Water on sidewalks, driveways and streets is a waste. Avoid run-off by reducing the volume from the sprinkler heads close to the street. Avoid watering on windy days.

Adjust Your Sprinkler System

Underground automatic sprinkler systems should be adjusted to accommodate changes in seasonal water demand. Remember, they are semi-automatic and require periodic checks throughout the summer. If you have an automatic system, adjust the time clock as the temperature changes to give your plants only the amount of water they need to stay healthy. If you have a manual system, carefully watch a clock or set a kitchen timer.

Know Your Soil Type

Know your soil type before you water. When water runs off your lawn and into the street, it often means that the soil is unable to absorb water as fast as it is being applied. As a simple guide, clay soils require slow watering. Clay soils dry out slowly and need infrequent watering. Sandy soils dry out quickly and require more frequent watering. Loam soils are a combination of clay, sand and silt. Most of the soils in Lincoln are of the clay-loam type. Install a moisture sensor in each automatic sprinkler zone for the most efficient use of water.

Deep Soak Your Lawn

Water once or twice a week, allowing time for the moisture to soak down to the roots (6-8 inches). Frequent light waterings encourages shallow root growth. Shallow root systems are not tolerant to drought. If your soil type will not allow you to deep-soak your lawn, split your watering times into two or more blocks to allow the soil to absorb the water.

Aerate Your Lawn

Aeration loosens soil and reduces compaction. After aeration, more water will reach the roots, resulting in less run-off. Aerate your lawn once or twice a year.

Only Water When Your Lawn is Dry

Don't water every day. Stick a screwdriver into the soil. If it offers little resistance to a depth of 6 inches, the soil has adequate moisture. Another simple test is to step on the grass. Grass will lie flat if the moisture is low. If the blades bounce back quickly, wait a day or two to water. Pay attention to the color of your lawn. When it is under stress it will change color, becoming more blue-green.

Plant Water Wise

While these tips are for lawns, you can save water outdoors by planting a water-conserving landscape. There are hundreds of low water use/drought tolerant plants, including turfgrasses, which will thrive in Lincoln. Call the Cooperative Extension Office in Lancaster County for a brochure. Many Lincoln nurseries also have this information.



Note: These water conservation tips are appropriate for lawns with a predominately Kentucky Bluegrass lawn. If you have another lawn type (e.g. fescue, zoysia) consult your nursery or call the County Cooperative Extension Office in Lancaster County at 441-7180 for advice.