

Sensible Irrigation Saves Water and Money

Spring is here. To a water utility, spring is the beginning of increasing water demand because of outdoor water use. This increases the water usage in the system. The City of Brunswick Water and Wastewater Department can produce water to meet demands that can be expected. The water system can provide much more water than it is allowed by permit to produce on a long-term basis.

Water conservation can help the community by making more water available for everyone without the cost and other impacts of developing new sources of water to meet the community's needs. Water conservation measures can be as simple as changing your daily routine to reduce water demand or as extensive as replacing plumbing fixtures such as toilets and shower heads with low-use fixtures such as are required in new construction.

One change in behavior lowering outdoor water use is watering your lawn *only* as much as it needs. Over-watering damages more lawns than not having enough water. Most turf only needs the equivalent of one inch of rainfall per week. An easy way to tell how much water has fallen put an empty tuna can on the watered area. When it is full, there has been enough water applied for a week.

Watering too frequently in small amounts encourages shallow root growth. Lawns with shallow roots are less drought resistant. It is better to do less frequent soaking than it is to do daily moistening.

Water in the early morning hours, preferably before the sun comes up. Watering in the afternoon on a hot day loses as much as one-third of the water to evaporation before the water even reaches the ground.

Soaker hoses apply water directly to plantings without as much evaporation as sprinklers. Mulching planting areas help the soil hold the water longer.

Watering pavement is not only wasteful but also adds to water pollution caused by runoff.

Direct water recycling done easily for potted plants by capturing used water from a bathtub or washer (called *gray water*) and applying it with a watering can. Shallow wells can be considered to be a form of recycling because some of the water put on the lawn sinks down into the water table that is supplying the well.

Planning your landscaping in a manner friendly to water conservation can also lower outdoor water requirements.

The term Xeriscape™ was created by combining *xeros* (Greek for "dry") with *landscape*. The word is a

trademark owned by Denver water. The trademark was intended to make sure the word is only used in community and voluntary water conservation efforts.

A Xeriscape™ is a landscape that is more water efficient and requires some planning. It does not mean a desert landscape (unless you actually live in a desert area).

- Use native plants or plants from similar climates and environments.
- Arrange groups of plants with similar water needs. You can have some plants with larger water needs and still save water by putting them together in a small area and using plants needing less water in other areas.
- If you have an irrigation system, set up zones for each group of plantings. Program water schedules to provide according to the actual needs of the plants in each zone. (Irrigation systems are notorious for wasting water if they go wrong. It is a good idea to check them every spring to make sure they are working properly.)
- Proper maintenance of the landscape is also essential to conserve water. Use fertilizer sparingly and do not cut grass too close.

The City of Brunswick Water and Wastewater Department is fully committed to proper stewardship of our water resources. Successful water conservation programs are essential to using water resources wisely. Saving water begins with you.

For more information on the Web:

Xeriscape, Colorado (local plant types will differ but principals are the same)	http://www.xeriscape.org/
Denver Water	http://denverwater.org/
Georgia Water Conservation Program	http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net/index.htm
Georgia Water Wise Council	http://168.29.148.205/www/urbanag/waterwise/
St. Johns River Water Management District	http://sjr.state.fl.us/index.html
(Coastal Northeast Florida is-similar to Coastal Georgia)	
Water - Use it Wisely	http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/
Water Saver	http://www.h2ouse.org/
WaterSmart	http://www.watersmart.net/
WaterWiser Page of American Water Works Association	http://www.awwa.org/waterwiser/
WaterWiser Drip Calculator	http://www.awwa.org/advocacy/learn/conserv/dripcalc.cfm
City of Brunswick Water Department	http://brunswickga.org/nm/publish/news_4.phtml/