

## Tips for smart landscape watering

Water may be a life and death situation for your landscape plants. It may also harm your drinking water. Here are some tips to save you money and protect the water you drink.

**Overwatering can kill your plants.** Overwatering clogs soil pores, which suffocates the roots. Let your plants dry out between waterings to let their roots breathe.

**Overwatering can pollute the water.** About 70 percent of the drinking water in the Redmond-Bear Creek Valley comes from groundwater. Excess irrigation can leach fertilizers and pesticides into the groundwater, local streams and lakes.

### Tips for Smart Watering

**Water your trees and shrubs slowly and deeply.** This helps your plants grow deep, healthy roots. All new plantings, even drought-tolerant plants, need regular water until roots are established, usually at least two growing seasons.

**Moisten the entire root zone, then let the soil dry out** before you water again. The root zone extends as wide as the plant or beyond. Water below the plant's outer branches, not at the trunk.

**Check your watering.** Several hours after watering, push a long screwdriver or metal rod into the ground. It will pass easily through moist soil and stop or slow down when it reaches dry soil.

**Mulch to conserve moisture.** Use a few inches of compost, wood chips, grass clippings or other organic materials in landscape beds. A one-inch layer can reduce soil surface temperatures by 15 degrees on a hot day.

**Group plants with the same water needs together** so plants get the right amount of water.

**Use a timer.** A simple kitchen timer will help you remember to turn off the water, saving money and your plants.

**Water when it's cool.** Watering mid-day, especially when it's sunny, will waste half the water to evaporation. Water plants in the morning or early evening.

**Check your irrigation system.** Many people with irrigation systems actually use *more* water because they set them once and forget them. If possible, use a timer as part of your irrigation system.

For more watering tips, visit [www.savingwater.org/](http://www.savingwater.org/). For gardening questions, contact the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline at 206-633-0224 or [info@lawnandgardenhotline.org](mailto:info@lawnandgardenhotline.org).

*This article was brought to you courtesy of King County and the Redmond-Bear Creek Groundwater Protection Committee.*