

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

400 WORCESTER RD., FRAMINGHAM, MA 01702-5399 508-820-2000 FAX 508-820-2030

MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

251 CAUSEWAY STREET, SUITE 900, BOSTON, MA 02114 617-626-1000 FAX 617-626-1181

Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force Tips for Saving Water (Outdoors)

OUTDOOR WATER USE

Abide by local water use restrictions

Local water suppliers know the limits of their system and will enact voluntary or mandatory restrictions accordingly. Always follow the advice or restrictions provided by your local water supplier.

Stop watering your lawn during drought conditions

Most lawns can survive extended dry periods without watering – they will turn brown, but will revive once the rain returns.

If you water your lawn, water only as needed

Frequent light watering can actually weaken your lawn by encouraging shallow roots that are less tolerant of dry periods. Water your lawn only as needed, generally no more than once or twice a week. A good test is to walk across the lawn. If the grass springs back up, it does not need to be watered.

Timing is critical for lawn watering

The best time to water your lawn is early morning (4 to 6 AM). Avoid watering at mid-day to prevent high evaporation and sun-burned grass.

No Water Or

No more than 1 Inch a week

Most lawns can survive extended dry periods without watering – they will turn brown, but will revive once the rain returns. If you want to water, give established lawns and shrubs a maximum of one inch of water per week. If there has been an inch of rain in the week, you don't need to water. Use an inexpensive rain gauge to measure rain and watering efforts.

Use shut-off nozzles on hoses and automatic shut-off devices on irrigation systems.

Unattended hoses can use 10 gallons or more per minute. Use shut-off nozzles to save water. Also, if you have an in-ground irrigation system, use a rain shut-off device that prevents the system from operating during rainstorms.

Capture and reuse rainwater

Use cisterns or rain barrels to capture rainwater from downspouts for use in your yard. A lid, mesh fabric or several drops of baby oil on the surface will prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

Keep your blades sharp and high

Keep your mower blades sharp to prevent tearing of grass and raise your lawn mower's blade to 2 1/2". Longer grass provides shade for the roots and helps reduce water loss.

Use plants that need less water

There are many varieties of low water use plants that can withstand dry summers and that actually thrive in drier soil.

Plan and design your garden for efficient outdoor watering

Be aware of the various shade and moistures zones in your yard and plan your gardens and plantings accordingly.

Mulch to keep roots cool and moist

Mulch can serve as a ground cover that reduces water evaporation from the soil while reducing the number of weeds that compete for soil moisture.

WATER CONSERVATION ON THE WEB

MWRA - www.mwra.state.ma.us/water/html/wat.htm

AWWA - www.waterwiser.org/

EPA's EnergyStar Program - www.energystar.gov/

New York City - www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/dep/html/hcisw.html