



Watering Wisely

Irrigation Ideas
to help you
save water
& money



City of Sarasota
Public Works Department



Sarasota's Water Supply

Sarasota's drinking water comes from the Floridan aquifer, a limestone layer that underlies most of the state. In turn, the aquifer draws its supply of water from rain that has seeped into the ground over hundreds of years. The City of Sarasota's 51 wells draw water from the aquifer at a depth of about 500 feet.

After the pumped fresh water goes through a treatment process, it is sent to homes throughout the city. On a typical day, a Sarasota resident uses about 90 gallons of that treated water.

Save Water & Save Money!

Sarasota has an adequate supply of water to meet citizens' needs, but we must be good stewards of our resource. Try these ideas to save both water *and* money:

- Follow the city's **water restrictions** listed in this brochure.
- **Adjust your watering** as your needs change. To see if your lawn needs water, step on the grass. If the grass stays flat when you move, water it. Grass that springs back when you move is moist enough.
- **Install moisture controls** or rain sensors on your irrigation system to override the system timer when irrigation isn't needed. Under Florida law, all new irrigation systems must now have this feature and it's a good idea for existing systems, too. See your irrigation contractor or home improvement center for product information.
- **Water your lawn early** in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation.
- **Don't over-irrigate.** A good soaking – 2/3 to 3/4 of an inch per irrigation session – is sufficient. Excess watering flushes nutrients (*that fertilizer you bought and applied!*) away from your lawn and into groundwater, where it becomes a pollutant.
- Have the city **install a meter** on your property to measure the amount of water you use for irrigation. You'll continue to pay for regular water use, but you won't pay wastewater charges for the water you use to irrigate. Meter installation costs vary based on the meter size required.
- **Use drip irrigation** for shrubs and trees.
- **Maintain your sprinkler system** and adjust sprinkler heads to water only your lawn – not sidewalks or streets.
- **Plan landscaping** to include drought tolerant plants that don't require much water.
- **Use a broom** instead of a garden hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.
- **Mulch flowerbeds and gardens** to reduce evaporation and discourage weed growth.
- **A quick-save tip:** Cut one minute off every 10 minutes you would usually water to save 10% on the amount of water used.

Although Florida doesn't experience the dramatic weather changes that occur in other parts of the country, our rainfall and temperatures do fluctuate seasonally, changing irrigation requirements.

Lower temperatures from October through February send plants into a resting stage. During cooler weather, watering can be reduced to once a week or less. Outdoor water use will be higher during the dry months: March, April and May. June through September is typically Florida's rainy season, when lawns and landscape may not need to be irrigated at all if normal rainfall occurs.

Water Restrictions

- For the latest information on regulations governing lawn and landscape watering in Sarasota, please call the Public Works Department at 941/955-2325 or visit our web site at www.sarasotagov.com. Follow the links to Public Works.
- Irrigation is prohibited from 10 am to 4 pm, except irrigation with recycled wastewater, which is allowed any day and at any time.
- Hand watering of plants, excluding lawns, is permitted any day.
- Cars may be washed any time, as long as a handheld hose with a shut-off nozzle is used.
- Rinsing boats and flushing boat motors is allowed for 10 minutes daily.

Florida Yards & Neighborhoods

Florida Yards and Neighborhoods is a public education and participation program that began as an effort to restore our bays and estuaries by encouraging people to switch to more environmentally friendly landscapes.

Model Florida Yard sites throughout Sarasota demonstrate proper water conservation and pollution control techniques, and explain how to achieve good results when you landscape.

Your Sarasota County Cooperative Extension Service Agent can give you more information. Call 941-861-9800.

A Florida-Friendly Yard

Homeowners can help preserve and protect Florida's natural resources by keeping the environment in mind while making decisions about landscaping. Your local extension agent, nursery, or garden center can provide you with full details. In the meantime, here are some of the many actions you can take to make your property a Florida-friendly yard:



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- Choose plants suited to your property.
- Group plants that share similar water needs.
- Plan your landscape so it can be maintained primarily by rainfall instead of watering.
- Maintain mulch at a 2 to 3 inch layer.
- Choose pine bark, eucalyptus or other alternatives to cypress mulch. Or mulch with fallen leaves or pine needles.
- Fertilize only when needed for the health of your plants or lawn.
- Take advantage of rainfall by directing downspouts and gutters to drain onto lawns and flowerbeds.
- Choose plants that provide food, shelter or nesting areas for wildlife.