

CONSERVATION

Connection News



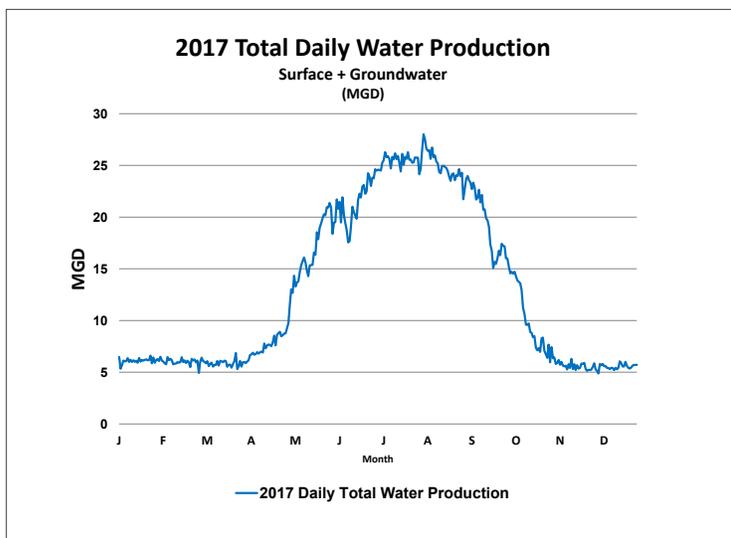
WATERING WISELY

Hard to believe it's already July. By this time you might be throwing on the PFD's to stay afloat through the backflow tests, bid work, afternoon consultations and attempts to get away to the lake for the weekend. The middle of summer is not usually a season we associate with employee training or education. However, July is an important month for water conscious irrigation practices. As the weather

heats up, landscape water use also increases. Outdoor water use swells to 60% and the season's high demands reach their peak in July. (See chart below.) It's crucial that we do the best we can to practice efficient irrigation.

The Irrigation Association suggests some simple points your company can focus on this month to make sure your customers irrigation systems are operating at the highest possible efficiency.

- **Get in the zone.** Schedule each individual zone in your irrigation system to account for type of sprinkler, sun or shade exposure, and soil in that section. Different zones will almost always need different watering schedules.
- **Water at the best time.** Watering during the heat of the day may cause losses of up to 30 percent due to evaporation. Prevent water loss by watering when the sun is low or down, winds are calm and temperatures are cool — typically between the evening and early morning.
- **Water more often for shorter periods.** For example, setting your system to run for three, 5-minute intervals lets soil absorb more water than watering for 15 minutes at one time, reducing runoff.
- **Adapt watering to the season.** Familiarize yourself with the settings on your irrigation controller and adjust the watering schedule regularly based on seasonal weather conditions. Or invest in a smart controller so your system can make these changes automatically.
- **Consider soil type.** Type of soil determines how quickly water can be absorbed without runoff. Watering more than soil can absorb causes runoff and waste.
- **Don't send water down the drain.** Set sprinklers to water plants, not your driveway, sidewalk, patio or buildings.
- **Water only when needed.** Saturate root zones and let the soil dry. Watering too much and too frequently results in shallow roots, weed growth, disease and fungus.





Partners in Conservation

The Water Wise program is interested to learn what your company is doing to promote water use efficiency and management through irrigation practices, unique landscape designs or customer engagement.

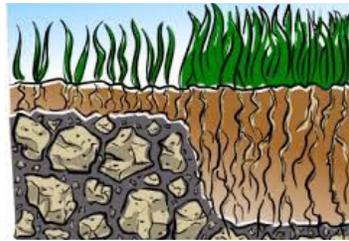
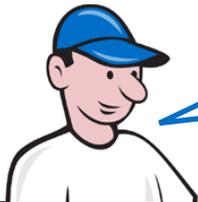
Please send us pictures and or a short description explaining how your company exemplifies Water Wise irrigation in Bend. One entry will be highlighted in a Water Wise Success Story. Send emails and questions to conservation@bendoregon.gov. or call us at 541 693 2194.

We look forward to seeing all the great examples!

Are You Certified?

What types of certifications do your employees hold? Many industry specific professional certifications are offered and can bring value to your company. A certification builds an investment in knowledgeable long term employees and reflects your commitment to providing Water Wise expertise to a resource conscious community. Many national organizations such as the Irrigation Association offer such certifications. Visit www.epa.gov/watersense/professional-certification or www.irrigation.org/certification to see which certifications might be applicable for your company.

Why does my customer's lawn have brown spots? I bumped up the runtime.... I can see water getting on the lawn...



You might have found yourself saying this in July and maybe included a few choice expletives. But before you add a second start time, make sure water is actually getting to the area in question, and remember it's brown for a reason.

Several things can contribute to a hot spot including varying soil type and depth, sprinkler spacing or a buildup of thatch. Central Oregon struggles with shallow, quick-draining soils that can restrict root depth and hold water like a screen door. Adequate amending

at the time of installation is always necessary to give the turf a fighting chance. If you happen to inherit one of those unfortunate lawns that was planted on shallow soil, cultural practices like aeration, topdressing and mowing heights become essential.

One of the first steps we take when assessing a hot spot is to take a soil probe and check both rooting depth and saturation depth of the soil core. Often times what we find is that the core is dry despite being right in front of a sprinkler. This

can confirm that the issue is with sprinkler coverage, as a result of stretched spacing, tilted/blocked sprinklers or misaligned sprinklers. Once we get to this point, we can take the necessary action to remedy the problem without flood irrigation. Sometimes it's as easy as changing nozzle size or moving a sprinkler, other times it could require a bid.

To sum it all up, getting to the root of the problem can lead to water savings and the long term health of the landscape.



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