

## **MAKE WATER WORK: Let your lawn grow**

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Too many of us look out at our lawn and are inclined to think it's too long. So in the heat, we reluctantly trot out the lawn mower and start cutting.

Well, there's actually good reason to let it go.

### **Don't mow, let it grow**

By keeping our grass two to three inches tall, we help conserve water. Longer grass allows the roots to be shaded so they are better able to hold water.

It also slows the evaporation of water from the soil, making it work more effectively. In turn, our lawns need less water and need it less often.

There's less freshwater available in the Okanagan than almost anywhere in Canada. Yet, on average, Okanagan residents use 675 litres of water per person, per day. This average spikes to 1,000 litres in the summer, used mostly on our lawns.

We can save 500 to 1,500 litres a week by letting our grass grow a little bit longer.

### **Leave grass clippings as mulch**

Water works best when grass clippings are left as mulch on your lawn. The clippings provide nutrients, reducing the need for fertilizer. They also help retain moisture, requiring less water and reducing evaporation.

And don't forget to aerate the lawn in early spring or fall. This will improve water penetration and help your lawn grow full and green.

### **One inch a week will do**

Most lawns need only 2.5 centimetres (one inch) of water per week – and after a good rain, not even that much.

Watering too much promotes shallow roots, weed growth, disease and fungus.

Watering deeply and less often promotes deep, healthy root growth. If you're watering deeply but not seeing results the problem may be inadequate topsoil. Try top dressing with half-an-inch of compost, then over-seeding for a thick vigorous lawn.

*Learn more at [www.makewaterwork.ca](http://www.makewaterwork.ca), then "Take the Pledge" and enter to win \$5,000 in WaterWise yard upgrades thanks to KelownaGardens.com. Make Water Work is an initiative of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its Okanagan WaterWise program.*

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