

If you water your lawn, make your water work

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Most of the residential water we use in the Okanagan is used outside on our lawns and gardens.

With the Okanagan's population expected to swell about 45 per cent by 2036 to more than 260,000, and as the need for summer time water increases—for food, for fish, for firefighting and more—it's important that we learn to be more WaterWise.

By following some simple tips, you'll get the most from the water you use.

The next time you turn on the hose or sprinkler, consider these helpful tips to Make Water Work.

- Put water on the night shift

Water during the coolest part of the day to prevent evaporation. A good rule of thumb is between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

- Water plants, not pavement.

Water where it's needed. It should sprinkle your lawn or garden, not the house, sidewalk, driveway or street.

Make water work efficiently and save time, money, and water.

- Don't mow. Let it grow.

Leave grass five to eight centimetres tall (two to three inches). Water stays longer when grass is longer.

Leaving your grass longer slows evaporation from the soil, making it work more effectively.

- One inch a week will do.

Most lawns need just 2.5 cm (one inch) of water per week—about the depth of a tuna can.

Watering deeply and less often promotes deep, healthy root growth.

If you're watering deeply and not seeing the results the problem may be inadequate topsoil.

Try top dressing with half an inch of compost, then over-seeding for a thick vigorous lawn.

- Pair water with plants suitable to our dry climate.

Okanagan water works best when paired with plants suitable to our dry climate—drought-tolerant turf, and native and low-water variety plants.

- Reduce and reuse your water.

Look around the house for sources of water that don't just come out of your tap.

For example, collect rainwater. Or, find ways to reuse water. Collect it from your shower or bath in a bucket and reuse it instead of letting it run down the drain.

Save your cooking water, from boiling pasta, eggs or vegetables, cool, and use later on your plants.

By taking small steps to conserve our water, we are helping ensure a sustainable supply.

Even tiny changes can add up to thousands of litres in water savings each year.

Learn more at 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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