

Your Water Smart Landscape at one year: Keeping it Simply Beautiful

Congratulations! Your Water Smart Landscape is now one year old! The Southern Nevada Water Authority thanks you for your commitment to water conservation and offers this newsletter full of seasonal tips to help you make the most of your landscape.

Drip tips

What makes drip work for plants? Drip irrigation cycles between saturating the soil at a slow rate of gallons per hour and then resting—so oxygen essential for good root growth can infiltrate the soil. Running a drip system every day (or every other day in cool seasons) not only defeats this cycle, but may eventually result in plant death from oxygen deprivation and soil salinization.

What to do: Once a year (now!)

- ❑ **Evaluate** how your plants have grown—including older trees and shrubs that were present prior to your conversion—and consider what changes you'll need to make to your irrigation system.
- ❑ **Add emitters** as plants grow: A maturing tree with one or two emitters at its base will develop a shallow root system that may eventually kill the tree or damage other areas of your landscape or hardscape. Multiple emitters are essential.
- ❑ **Move emitters outward** to your plants' expanding root zones: Reposition current emitters and/or add new emitters so that 50-75 percent of the expanding root-zone area under the plant or tree canopy gets water.



WALK YOUR PROPERTY TO VISUALLY ASSESS PLANT GROWTH AND HEALTH.

Twice a year (spring and fall)

- ❑ **Adjust** your irrigation clock for daylight-saving time and check your backup battery.
- ❑ **Clean and inspect** drip filters. Open the ends of filters and run water through. Soak screens in a 50/50 water-vinegar solution if you see mineral buildup. Replace torn screens.



FLUSH OUT YOUR DRIP LINES TO CLEAN OUT DEBRIS.

- ❑ **Flush out** debris from your drip lines: Find the "end cap," typically at the far end of the line. Uncap it and run the system by turning on the valve manually; 30 seconds is enough. Flush out the system through the end cap any time repairs are done or when new emitters are added.
- ❑ **Check** valve boxes for debris build-up or mud. This can indicate poor drainage. Pooling water may indicate a leak.

Monthly

- ❑ **Walk through** your landscape and check drip lines for breaks and emitters for clogs or broken heads. Also look for "wet spots" at ground level that may indicate irrigation leaks below the surface.

Weekly (in summer)

- ❑ **Assess** plant health visually and address any individual problems. While watering restrictions exist year-round, you can hand-water stressed landscaping at any time.
- ❑ **Check** your irrigation-clock settings and reset as needed.

Simply beautiful watering basics for each

Winter (November-February)

Run drip systems:

1 day a week,
in a single cycle of 30-90 minutes

Run sprinklers:

1 assigned day a week,
in 3 cycles of 4 minutes each

Time of day to water:

Mid- to late morning

Special notes: During colder months, drip run times should be shorter in duration. Add or refresh mulch around plants to insulate the soil and conserve water.

Bermuda grass, cacti and succulents require less water in winter.



PRIMROSE JASMINE *JASMINUM MESNYI*



COPPER KING GAZANIA *GAZANIA 'COPPER KING'*

Spring (March-April)

Run drip systems:

2 days a week,
in a single cycle of 30-90 minutes

Run sprinklers:

Up to 3 assigned days a week,
in 3 cycles of 4 minutes each

Time of day to water:

Early morning

Special notes: Plant water needs will increase as weather warms. Base your drip run times on your emitter flow rate, soil type and weather conditions. Adjust run times incrementally to avoid runoff and puddling and to prevent overwatering.

Summer (May-August)

Run drip systems:

3 days a week, in a single cycle of 30-90 minutes

Run sprinklers:

Up to 7 days a week, in 3 cycles of 4 minutes each

Time of day to water:

Early morning, before sunrise

Special notes: If you still have turf in your landscape, add summer watering days only as needed. Many lawns do well with 4-5 watering days a week in early summer and 6 days a week in mid- to late summer. Hand-water stressed plant or lawn areas as needed and check your irrigation system weekly.



PURPLE CONEFLOWER *ECHINACEA PURPUREA* (ASTERACEAE)

Fall (September-October)

Run drip systems:

2 days a week,
in a single cycle of 30-90 minutes

Run sprinklers:

3 assigned days a week,
in 3 cycles of 4 minutes each

Time of day to water:

Early morning, before sunrise

Special notes: Add or refresh mulch around plants to insulate the soil and conserve water. Add additional drip emitters around growing trees and shrubs. Aerate the soil around plants as well as any lawn areas to improve water and fertilizer penetration.



DESERT WILLOW *CHILOPSIS LINEARIS*

Plant watering requirements vary throughout the Las Vegas Valley. For best results, check your irrigation system frequently and monitor your plants and soil moisture. Soil around plants should be moist but not wet between waterings.

Mandatory watering schedules: What you need to know

Drip irrigation is allowed any day of the week in summer, 3 days a week in spring and fall and 1 day a week in winter. But plants on drip do well with less. The SNWA recommends a single, long drip cycle:

1 day a week in winter
(November-February)

2 days a week in spring and fall
(March-April, September-October)

3 days a week in summer
(May-August)

You can do even more to enhance the long-term health and beauty of your Water Smart Landscape if you make more-frequent watering adjustments. Call **258-SAVE** to request a free, interactive **Simply Beautiful CD-ROM** that includes month-by-month drip watering tips, plant guides and more

And what about sprinklers?

Even a Water Smart Landscape can have functional turf. Sprinkler irrigation must adhere to assigned watering days. Find your watering group on snwa.com, check your bill or call your water provider. Watering with a handheld hose and supervised testing of your irrigation system are allowed at any time.



Keeping it “simply beautiful:”

Maintenance at one year

- ❑ Refresh worn patches in organic or rock mulch. Organic mulches, such as bark or wood chips, may need refreshing more often. Blend newly purchased rock-mulch material with existing rock, since it may vary in color or size.
- ❑ Remove stakes and ties for all but the most fragile of plants. Stakes left on too long can actually reduce growth.
- ❑ Leave damaged, desert-adapted plants alone. While extreme heat may take a toll on some plants, be patient. Check for new growth in fall when it cools. Replace plants that didn't make it with varieties suited to the environment of that zone. Plants in smaller containers are less expensive and will mature in a season or two.
- ❑ Water newly established plants more according to plant needs for the first 30 days. Add mulch on the soil around your plants to conserve water and protect them.
- ❑ Don't fertilize desert-adapted plants in summer. Wait until fall, then use a balanced organic mix of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium.
- ❑ Don't prune yet. Prune in mid- to late winter, when plants are dormant and sap production is down. You may need to do little pruning for the first few years. Allow trees and shrubs to grow naturally when possible. Over-pruning can reduce flowering and increase water needs. Never remove more than one-third of the plant's living tissue during the year.



ALLOW TREES AND SHRUBS TO GROW NATURALLY WHEN POSSIBLE.

- ❑ Spray aphids and other pests with a strong blast of water from your hose: You'll knock bugs off and damage or drown many of them without pesticides. Or, buy beneficial predators such as ladybugs at nurseries and set them loose to attack aphids and let nature run its course.

Water Smart: More watering tips

Hardy and colorful desert-adapted plants can handle the summer heat, and after one year, your Water Smart Landscape should have begun to truly mature, bloom and develop. Water wisely to enhance your yard's natural beauty:

- ❑ Water in early-morning hours before sunrise in summer to avoid water lost to daytime evaporation and late-day winds.



WATERING IN THE EARLY MORNING PREVENTS WATER LOSS FROM EVAPORATION AND WIND.

- ❑ Don't overwater: 3 long drip watering cycles per week are plenty for plants and trees during summer months. Shaded or protected areas in your landscape may require even less.
- ❑ Avoid running sprinklers between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., May 1 until Oct. 1, if you still have some lawn areas in your Water Smart Landscape.
- ❑ A Water Smart Landscape can reduce water usage by as much as 75 percent. Compare your current water bill with bills from the prior year; you can contact your water provider for assistance if needed. If you are not seeing decreases in the dollar amount of your bill as well as how many gallons of water you're using per month, you are probably overwatering. You also may have a leak or malfunction in your irrigation system.

Pruning and plant-care classes are offered year-round at the Gardens at the Springs Preserve. For details, visit springspreserve.org.

Visit snwa.com for more tips to ensure the success of your landscape.



SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY

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