

## Tips for Turf

If you have a lawn, chances are it's your biggest water gobbler. Typically, at least 50% of water consumed by households is used outdoors - and most of that is for lawns.

Over-watering lawns leads to shallow root systems that are susceptible to drought, weeds, and disease. Too much irrigation also increases runoff that carries fertilizer and other pollutants into streams and groundwater. Here are a few tips for water-wise turf...

- Most lawns only need about 1" of water a week to stay green. Use a tuna can to measure how much your sprinklers apply.
- Use a drought tolerant grass seed mix or ecolawn. Fall is the best time to seed.
- Let your lawn go dormant for summer. Water dormant lawns 1/2" each rainless month to keep roots alive. Your lawn will green up again when fall rains begin.
- Test soil before applying fertilizer to see what it really needs.
- Aerate turf before summer to improve water penetration, especially on slopes.
- Raise mowing heights to 2.5 - 3 inches to improve rooting depth.
- Leave the clippings. "Grasscycling" makes lawns healthier and more drought resistant, and does not cause thatch. Grass-cycling can also cut fertilizer needs by up to 50%.
- Keep mower blades sharp to avoid tearing and stressing the grass.
- In fall, over-seed thin areas to bring back a lush lawn. Aerate, then top dress with compost, and if needed, fertilize with "slow-release" or "natural" fertilizer.

**For more information  
about water conservation,  
contact:**

Hood River Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
541-386-4588

Hood River Watershed Group  
541-386-6063

OSU Extension Service  
541-386-3343

**Or call your local irrigation district:**

East Fork Irrigation District  
541-354-1185

Farmers Irrigation District  
541-386-3115

Middle Fork Irrigation District  
541-352-6468

Mt Hood Irrigation District  
541-490-1627

Dee Irrigation District  
541-806-3248

**Or call a local irrigation  
equipment supplier**

**Water smarter -  
not harder**



**Hood River Soil & Water  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Hood River  
Watershed Group**



# Outdoor Water-Saving Tips for Hood River County Residents

## Why Conserve Water in the Hood River Watershed?

The Hood River Valley has mountain snow, glaciers and spring-fed streams to sustain its water supply. However, during the summer when water withdrawals are at their peak, parts of the Hood River basin experience low streamflows. This reduces fish habitat, negatively affecting the Hood River's coho, Chinook, bull trout and steelhead, which are listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Landowners, irrigators, government agencies, and tribes are working to help threatened fish by improving fish passage, replacing outdated fish screens and culverts, enhancing streamside forests, enforcing fishing laws, controlling farm runoff, and upgrading orchards to more efficient irrigation systems.

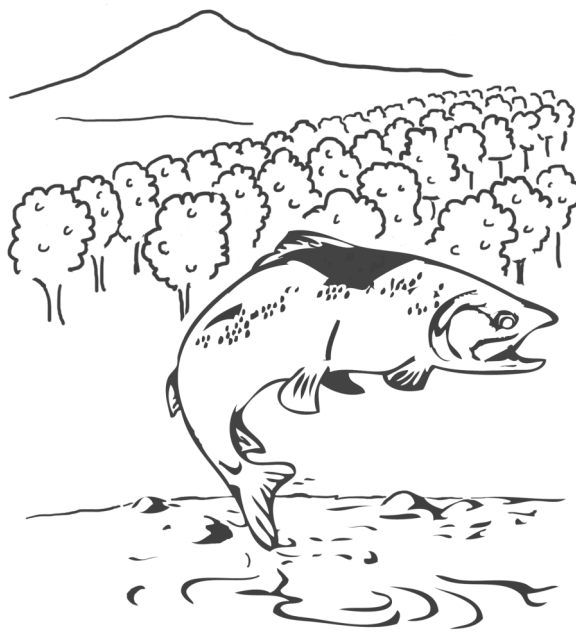
By increasing water efficiency and eliminating water waste around our homes and landscapes, each of us can help keep more water in the Hood River watershed and improve conditions for fish and wildlife.

### Know Your Rights!

If you have a water right and your water is delivered by an irrigation district, learn what your allotment is so that you can stay within it. If you do not have a water right, check with your domestic water provider to learn their rules for using domestic water for irrigation.

## 10 Water-Wise Tips for Your Landscape

1. Water early in the day between 4 a.m. and 9 a.m. when evaporation is lowest. The next best time is after 8 p.m. at night. Avoid watering on windy days - wind increases evaporation!
2. Water infrequently but deeply. This promotes growth of deep root systems so plants can withstand longer dry periods while staying healthy.
3. Check for leaking or broken sprinklers, hoses, and water lines. Fix them quickly.
4. Never apply water faster than it can be absorbed. Sloped areas are tricky to water effectively. Contour around each plant to create a water well, or use terracing.
6. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean patios, sidewalks and driveways.
7. Consider letting your lawn go dormant in the summer. It will green up again in the fall.
7. Redirect sprinklers to avoid hitting the pavement. Watering pavement is wasteful.
8. Replace high-flow sprinklers with low-flow, micro-sprinklers or drip irrigation lines.
9. Remove weeds regularly and use a weed barrier such as mulch material, bark, or filter fabric. Weeds rob other plants of water.
10. Mix composted yard trimmings, manure, leaves and other organics into your soil to increase its water retention capacity and nutrients.



## Landscaping With Less

Aside from adjusting how and when you apply water to your yard and garden, there are many other water saving techniques you can use in your landscape to help conserve water. Here are a few to try:

- \* **Mulch:** Bark chips, straw or even newspaper can help decrease water loss from the soil. Mulch also keeps soil porous, improves aeration and increases infiltration.
- \* **Plant Selection:** Choose drought tolerant and/or native plants for your landscape and enjoy water savings and reduced maintenance.
- \* **Rain Barrels:** Collect rain water from your downspouts in the wet months for use in the dry summer months.
- \* **Shade & Windbreaks:** By sheltering your plants from hot sun and drying winds you can reduce their water demands significantly.