

**Thanks to the organizations that  
contributed to this brochure:**

The St. Charles County  
Soil and Water Conservation District

The Missouri  
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The University of Missouri Extension

ShowMe Rain Gardens — a water  
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Soil & Water Conservation District

Gateway Irrigation Association

In a world where everything we touch frequently changes, water is our constant. We've never stopped needing it to drink, to cook, to clean, to live. We'll always need it for sanitation, for fire protection, for watering our lawns and washing our cars.

It's easy to take water for granted. And because so many do, we don't.

We are scientists, environmentalists, innovators, and protectors. We are also residents and employees in the communities we serve. We understand how important, how precious, and how critical water is to daily life.

**WE CARE ABOUT WATER.  
IT'S WHAT WE DO.**



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AMW136I



# Using Water Wisely Outside



**Simple steps to creating an  
attractive landscape and  
managing your water usage.**

## Did you know...

that as much as 80 percent of the water used around your home in the summer is for outside uses? You can control your water use and your water bill. Using water wisely can help you maintain an attractive yard and manage your water usage.

### Learn from Your Land

Planning a new yard or updating your landscape? Let your property's contours, drainage, shade patterns, and soil guide your plan. A landscape plan that combines turfgrass with other plantings can be attractive and eco-friendly.

- Consider Missouri's native plants. Native plants have evolved over time with Missouri's geology, climate and wildlife. Generally, they support wildlife, help preserve our natural diversity and require less water and no fertilizer or herbicides. You can find more information at [GrowNative.org](http://GrowNative.org).
- Find an opportunity for a rain garden. Rain gardens use native plants and grasses to capture and absorb rain water from rooftops, roads and sidewalks. These planned gardens help control erosion, simplify yard maintenance and reduce runoff into streams and stormwater systems. You can learn more about creating a rain garden at [ShowMeRainGardens.com](http://ShowMeRainGardens.com).
- Group plants according to their water needs for more efficient irrigation.



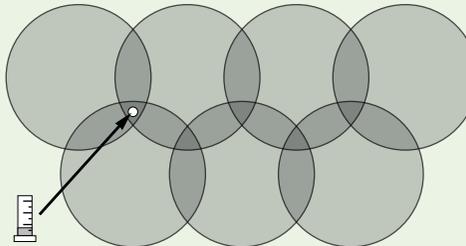
### Water Your Lawn Wisely

- Let your lawn tell you when to water. When you walk across your lawn do you leave footprints? Do the leaves of the grass have a purple-blue tint? That means it's time to water your lawn.
- Strengthen your turf. Grass with deeper roots draws moisture from a bigger area, so it requires less water. Encourage deeper roots by setting your mower at a taller mowing height and planning fewer, longer waterings.
- Water in the early morning to avoid water waste through evaporation and reduce the potential for plant diseases.
- To maintain water system safety, automated irrigation systems must be equipped with a reduced-pressure-principle backflow prevention device. Device test reports, from certified testers, must be submitted annually. Learn more at [www.missouriamwater.com](http://www.missouriamwater.com).

### Measure the Water Your Yard Receives

The University of Missouri Extension guidelines recommend that turfgrass receives about one to one-and-a-half inches of water per week from irrigation or rainfall during the hottest months of July and August. A rain gauge will tell you how much rain has fallen in a week. There's a simple way to measure the amount of water that your sprinkler applies.

#### Measure Your Sprinkler Output



Watering pattern for sprinklers

St. Louis and St. Charles counties have abundant water supplies. However, it's important to use our water resources wisely. At about a penny per gallon, water is a good value. Using it wisely makes good sense for our future and our environment.



- Place a shallow, straight-sided container – like a tuna can – within the grid of your sprinkler or irrigation system heads.
- Operate your sprinkler or irrigation system and see how many minutes it takes to apply  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of water to the cans. A few simple calculations can help you figure your delivery rate in inches per hour.
- Match the output of your irrigation system with the infiltration rate of your soil. Many soils (such as clay soils) will only infiltrate about  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of water per hour, so you may have to change your timing or sprinkler location to avoid puddles and runoff.
- Once you know how much water your sprinklers apply, you can adjust your irrigation system timing. Hose-end sprinklers can be attached to inexpensive timers to avoid over-watering.
- If you have an automated irrigation system, you may want to have your irrigation maintenance provider check it for efficiency and coverage.

Learn more about home lawn watering from the University of Missouri Extension at <http://extension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/hort/g06720.htm>.