The Yard

Drip Irrigation

A drip irrigation system is a way to water plants that uses very little water. In fact, it is considered to be 90-95% efficient and it saves up to 60% more water than sprinklers.

Drip irrigation is a hose that runs from your spout, under the ground, and comes out at the plant. There is a little hole on the spout where a drip of water is delivered directly at the base of the plant.

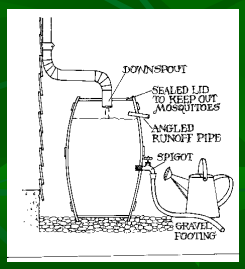
With a sprinkler, water goes everywhere and sometimes you're watering the sidewalk instead of the plants. With drip irrigation, the water goes directly to the roots. There are even timers you can buy that hook up to these systems that can be connected to the National Weather Service. If it is in the forecast that there will be rain in the next 24 hours, the timer will not go off and the system will not water your plants.

Drip Irrigation systems start at about $200-$600 to install, depending on the lawn size. They are moderately easy to install and do require a little maintenance.

Rain Barrels

A Rain Barrel is a barrel that is attached to your gutter. When it rains, the water that goes in to your gutter flows down the spout and in to the barrel. You can then use that water when you need it to water your plants or wash your car. Rain Barrels range in price from 50-300 depending on size and design.

Using "harvested" rain water instead of using the tap saves a little money but a lot of water. The water in a 60 gallon rain barrel is the equivalent of one shower, one load of laundry and using the sinks in your house for one day.



Composting

Most people throw their left over food into the sink and use the garbage disposal but, leftover food can become rich soil for plants by using a compost bin. Composting saves the water used to run the disposal and the using compost in the garden helps hold water in the soil longer.

Compost is made by collecting kitchen scraps and yard waste, such as leaves and grass clippings, in a warm, moist spot. It is broken down by bacteria, fungi, insects and worms. The more heat there is, the faster the compost is made.

Composting is free but specialized bins range from $34-$469. Countertop composters have filters that prevent odors and save trips to the yard until the end of the day.

Xeriscaping

Xeriscaping is landscaping that uses both local and drought tolerant plants, along with rocks and groundcover. It reduces the amount of water you need to use by reducing the amount of lawn you have.

Using xeriscaping can reduce the amount of water you use in the yard by up to 60%.

At $3.50-$10 per square foot, it can be expensive to start, but it will save money and water in the long run.

Zeroscaping

For areas where it is hard to get plants or grass to grow, a better choice is Zeroscaping – using rocks, sand and desert plants that require no watering.

Zeroscaping costs about $1-$4 per square foot.

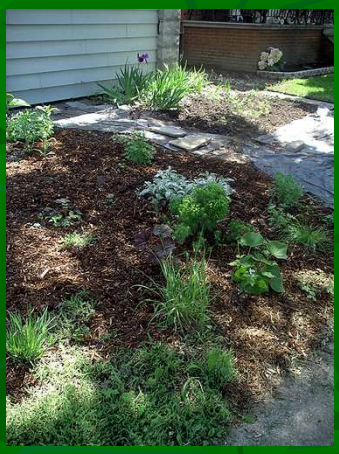
Mulching and Soil Additives

The use of mulch and soil additives increase the amount of water that stays in the soil by reducing evaporation, keeping soil loose and protecting planting beds from erosion.

The cost of mulch ranges from free, using grass clippings and leaves, up to $11 per square foot for rubber mulches that will last for years.

Soil additives vary in price.

Both can reduce water usage by up to 50%.



Water Saving Tips

1. Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust the sprinkler so only the long is being water not the house or the side walk.
2. Avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
3. Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost instead and save gallons every time.
4. Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower
5. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your drive way or sidewalk and save 80 gallons of water every time.
6. We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.
7. Only water your lawn when needed. You can tell this by simply walking across your lawn . If you leave footprints it's time to water.
8. Use the sprinkler in larger areas of grass. Water small patches of by hand to avoid waste.
9. Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect and use it in yore garden.
10. Water your summer lawns once every three days and you winter lawn once every five days.