

Proper watering habits will ensure your landscape remains healthy throughout the summer

Outdoor water use in the Valley tends to rise significantly as summer temperatures climb. Ensuring your system is functioning properly and watering correctly – deeply and less frequently – are the keys to maintaining your landscape's health and beauty. While we often think more water is needed, especially with escalating temperatures, that is not always the case.

With the arrival of July and [Smart Irrigation Month](#), it's a perfect time to transform your outdoor watering habits by making simple changes to achieve efficient and effective watering (and save money) this summer.



Water deeper and less often, even when the temperatures soar

Slow the flow. You want to water slowly and deeply to ensure the moisture reaches the roots of your plants. If water is applied too quickly, it won't absorb and will run into unwanted places in your yard. If you water deeply, you do not have to water as frequently. Proper watering is essential in our arid climate because the heat and wind quickly dry the soil's surface.

When watering correctly - deeply and not as frequently - even your thirstiest plants, like grass, should be watered *no more than twice a week*. Established trees and shrubs need to be watered only once every other week. And desert-adapted plants need even less. However, if you notice some of your plants are struggling during periods of extreme heat, they can be supplemented with some extra water.

Most people tend to overwater their entire landscapes, including low-water-use plants, which encourages excessive growth of diseases and other maintenance problems. Deep infrequent watering encourages strong, healthy root systems that can better tolerate intense heat and periods of drought.

Watering at the ideal time is also vital to achieving water efficiency in the hottest months. Make sure you don't water when it's windy when that precious water will blow away or evaporate. When it rains, give your irrigation system a break for a few days, but if you have a smart irrigation timer, it will adjust for you. And finally, make sure you are not watering during the sunniest and hottest hours of the day when water will simply evaporate; instead, aim to water early in the morning- one to three hours before sunrise.

Inspect and properly maintain your irrigation system

Another key element to watering efficiently is making sure your system is running properly. So take time for an irrigation check-up, especially when the weather intensifies in the summer

months. Many homeowners trust their yards to an automated irrigation controller. While the controller may be reliable, your pipes, sprinkler heads, and drip lines are less so. Drip lines are particularly susceptible to weather. High temperatures, dust, and rain can clog, crack and break emitters and lines. In these situations, when your reliable irrigation controller comes on, plants don't get watered, or gallons of wasted water can pool or run off your yard into the street.

It's as simple as turning on your irrigation system and walking around to inspect that everything is working correctly. Check sprinkler heads for damage, including clogs caused by grass and leaves. [AMWUA's Smart Home Water Guide](#) can help. It will help you identify any leaks that need to be fixed before too much water waste happens. Additional information on irrigation system maintenance is also available on the [Landscaping with Style](#) website.

Many municipalities have rebates for smart irrigation controllers and workshops on irrigation systems, so visit your [local water conservation office](#) to learn more.

Now with a better understanding of how to be smart with your irrigation, you can keep your landscape healthy while ensuring you are efficient with your outdoor water use, even with the scorching summer temperatures. The bottom line is you can keep it simple – water correctly, and your landscape can thrive with much less water.

For more information on outdoor watering, check out this [interactive watering guide](#) created specifically for the Phoenix metro area and its unique conditions. This watering guide walks you through how much and how often to water and shows you how to set your irrigation timer, troubleshoot your system, and many other tips about outdoor watering.

For additional resources and information, visit our [conservation pages](#).

For over 50 years, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has helped protect our member cities' ability to provide their communities with assured, safe, and sustainable water supplies. For more information, visit www.amwua.org.