

WISE WATER USE FACT SHEET

Waterwise Gardens

What desolate places our cities and towns would be without gardens!

While we all want to be waterwise it is sad to see some gardens suffering as people strive to save water.

With some established trees and shrubs worth hundreds or even thousands of dollars, it is a pity and a waste to kill them off for the sake of a few cents worth of water. In fact, average residential water use in South Australia costs only 75-80 cents a day.

There is no doubt that a lovely green and colourful garden adds value to your home- as well as providing you with a daily green pleasure. By all means use less water in the garden, but do it wisely.

Start with designing your garden to be water efficient, not only in layout and use of materials but also in using the most efficient means of watering exactly where it is needed, in exactly the right quantities and at the right intervals.

TOP TIPS...

- * Mulching is great for all plants. A 50mm layer should be spread all over your garden beds.
- * Organic mulches break down and feed your plants, reduce evaporation loss from the soil by up to 73%, restrict weed growth, prevent wind and water erosion, shade the ground, and look great!
- * Always leave a breathing space of 50mm around stems and trunks of plants.
- * Where appropriate, plant windbreaks of trees and shrubs around your fences to reduce the evaporating effects of hot summer winds and damaging winter storms and frost.
- * Over watering does not improve plant growth and wastes water, so use micro-irrigation systems for plants, shrubs and trees and large droplet sprinklers for lawn areas.
- * Plan your flower beds to be mass displays which can be watered efficiently and independently of other areas of the garden.
- * Consider landscaping alternatives such as paving and rock gardens but avoid too much exposed paving which can be hot and glaring – plant to shade and soften these areas while adding colour and interest.
- * Choose a low water use grass suited to SA conditions and avoid planting lawn on steep slopes or paths which are difficult to water efficiently. Lawns should not just be used as a “fill in” when nothing else can be thought of, but should be soft open spaces which link the various elements of the garden.

- * Let your grass grow a little longer in summer – a lawn that’s shorter than 2cm won’t have enough leaf area to protect itself from harsh sun. And only water your lawn when it needs it. A good way to check is to step on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn’t need water. If it stays flat, it needs watering.
- * Prepare your soil before planting. Organic matter mixed through the top layer will dramatically improve both water and nutrient holding capacity.
- * Keep high water-demand plants to a minimum – consider some of South Australia’s beautiful native species and other waterwise exotics. These will integrate beautifully together.
- * Arrange plants with similar water requirements together – this is called hydrozoning.
- * Do not force feed plants on with large amounts of strong fertilisers. These produce lush growth that has a high water transpiration rate and are more prone to insect and fungal attack. Slow release fertilisers are better.
- * Terracotta pots are porous and allow moisture to escape comparatively quickly – waterproof them before you plant.
- * Self watering pots come in many styles and are very water efficient.
- * For container planting check on the type of potting mix recommended for the particular plant. Good ones contain water absorbent polymers. Always use a potting mix made to the Australian Standard.

ENQUIRIES

If you have any enquiries or require further information please contact SA Water Customer Contact Centre on **1300 650 950**.



Government
of South Australia