

CONSERVING WATER STARTS IN THE YARD

Keeping Your Garden And Your Wallet Green

(NAPSA)—From space, our blue planet seems rich in water. In reality, 97 percent of the planet's water is saltwater, two percent is in the form of snow and icebergs, and just one percent is usable fresh water. Water conservation should be practiced at all times, and not just in times of water shortages.

With up to 70 percent of water use occurring outside the home, the efficient use of water can start in the yard. Done correctly, it's possible to keep your garden green and conserve water. To get the most out of your gardening, the experts at Rain Bird Corporation—a leader in the irrigation industry—advise following these tips.

Prevent drowning. The greatest waste of water comes from applying too much, too often. Much of the water is lost to runoff because it's applied too rapidly, and some water evaporates from exposed, un-mulched soil. Instead of watering for 20 minutes straight, water four times for five minutes each, with a 15-minute break between each session. This will let water soak in and minimize runoff.

Just a trim. Trim grass at a higher mower setting to shade roots from sunlight and encourage deeper roots.

Clock-watcher. Try to water between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m., when the sun is low, winds are calm and temperatures are cool. Watering in the evening isn't a good idea because leaf surfaces can remain wet overnight—an invitation to fungal diseases.

Divide and conquer. Divide your yard and landscaping into separate irrigation zones so grass



Instead of watering your garden for 20 minutes, water four times for five minutes each, with a 15-minute break in between.

can be watered separately and more frequently than groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

Get to the root. When it comes to trees, flowerbeds, potted containers, or other non-grassy areas, drip irrigation is by far the most efficient way to water. The water flows through low pressure emitters, bubblers or spray heads placed near the roots of each plant. Water applied by drip irrigation has little chance of being wasted through evaporation or runoff.

Cover it up. Significantly reduce moisture evaporation from the soil by placing a layer of non-living material, referred to as mulch, on the soil surface around plants.

Let it rain. Install a shutoff device that automatically detects rain. They are inexpensive and let you take advantage of nature's precious gift without paying for it.

For more watering tips, and information on The Intelligent Use of Water visit the Web site at www.rainbird.com.