

The Real Truth About Watering & the Environment

At Atlantic Lighting & Irrigation, we know that environmental concerns are taking front and center stage with consumers and as a homeowner you may be left wondering if you can safely water and care for your landscaping without harming the environment. The answer is not only yes, but keeping a healthy lawn and landscape is important part of our eco system and it actually helps to protect the environment.

In this guide we'll share with you our thoughts and experience along with hard facts from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA.) We want you to know the truth about watering and know as much as possible about watering your lawn and landscape.

Atlantic Lighting & Irrigation supports the concerns felt by consumers as well as government agencies regarding our environment, thus this publication to present to you the real truth regarding going green and keeping your lawn green. The environment needs to be respected and more attention needs to be paid to the issues that impact it. On the other hand, we need to closely examine some misinformation out there regarding watering lawns.

Myth: Lawns are just used to make a house look good, they serve no other purpose.

Fact: Lawns serve as more than just decoration; they are part of the environment and have several benefits to the eco-system.

Storm runoff is a big deal, particularly if you live near the Chesapeake Bay or any of its lakes or streams. Storm water runoff is the unfiltered water that reaches streams, lakes, and eventually the ocean by flowing across surfaces such as roads, parking lots, driveways, and roofs. These hard surfaces, often referred to as impervious surfaces, do not allow rain to penetrate the earth. Instead, the fallen rain quickly runs directly into storm drains, ditches, and streams, all without the benefit of filtration.

A lawn helps reduce storm water runoff by absorbing water. Not only does it absorb storm water and reduce runoff, a lawn actually helps filter the water and thus ultimately improves water quality.

But, many decry, even if a lawn does serve a purpose, and an important one at that, what about the water necessary to keep a lawn green and healthy? Well, let's look at more myths and facts regarding watering and lawns.

Myth: Lawns need water every day to stay green and healthy.

Fact: Watering a lawn daily may actually lead to overwatering, not to mention inefficiency.

In fact, it's usually not necessary to water grass every day. Check your lawn before watering. The best way to ensure that your lawn is properly watered is with an automatic sprinkler system with a sensor that measures rain fall and controls the watering schedule accordingly.

If you don't have an irrigation system there's a simple test you can perform to determine if your lawn needs a healthy drink of water. Before dragging out that muddy garden hose, test your lawn by first stepping on a patch of grass; if it springs back, it doesn't need water, if it remains on the flat side, fire up those sprinklers.

Myth: Watering your lawn wastes water.

Fact: Inefficient watering wastes water. In fact, it is estimated that inefficient watering can lead to evaporation, run-off and over-watering, wasting more than 50% of the water used.

But watering a lawn doesn't have to be inefficient. There are many changes a homeowner or a business can make to water lawns and landscapes more efficiently. These changes include:

- Water early in the morning when the air is cool and calm.
- Don't overwater – a rotating schedule is best.
- Use native plants for your area, they require less water, not to mention less maintenance, as they tend to thrive in their native growing conditions and habitat.
- Water less often, but thoroughly as light, frequent watering promotes shallow root growth making grass and plant more likely to dry out. Watering deeply encourages grass to develop deep, healthy root systems, which actually makes lawns hardier and more drought resistant.

Myth: Not watering my lawn is better for the environment.

Fact: Poor care, including ignoring watering needs and inadequate feeding, weakens your lawn so neither you nor the environment receive the benefits of a healthy lawn.

The benefits of a healthy lawn include preventing soil erosion, reducing storm runoff and maintaining soil permeability. Ignoring watering needs will result in a high maintenance and an inefficient lawn and landscape, while reaping none of the benefits.

Myth: A lawn irrigation system will waste water.

Fact: When compared to hand watering with hoses and sprinklers, lawn irrigation systems give more uniform coverage and actually reduces water loss.

Using weather-based irrigation scheduling on a moderate sized yard, for example, can reduce a household's outdoor water use by about 15 percent, saving up to 37 gallons of water every day.

Alternatively, a weather-based irrigation controller can do the scheduling for you, providing the right amount of water to your plants automatically if adjusted properly. In fact, irrigation systems allow several ways to ensure maximum water efficiency while nourishing planting beds and lawns; including:

- Installation of a rain sensor shut-off device to prevent watering during and after rain.
- Use of smart technology such as a weather-based irrigation controller.
- Drip or low volume irrigation emitters which apply water to a uniform soil depth, either directly to the plant root zone or in a limited area. Water is delivered at or below the surface of the planted area versus to the surface of the planted area to increase efficiency, as well as a healthier plant.
- Use of overlapping, head to head coverage for efficient and uniform water distribution.
- Installation of low angle nozzles in the windy areas to lessen water loss.
- Adjusting water application rates to avoid water runoff.
- Planned zones of the irrigation system according to plant type and their water needs. For example, lawn areas can be placed on a separate zone from flower or shrub beds and set to water according to their differing needs.

Both homeowners and commercial properties can take charge of their water bills and conserve water by installing and properly maintaining irrigation systems. In fact, the EPA has partnered with professionals in a certification program called WaterSense to preserve the nation's water supply by ensuring proficiency in water-efficient system design, installation, maintenance and system checks. Each of our key staff members are EPA WaterSense certified partners which means that your system will be designed and installed to properly nourish your landscape while preserving water and preventing waste and runoff.

About Atlantic Lighting & Irrigation

Atlantic Lighting & Irrigation has been installing, repairing and servicing irrigation systems for well over 20 years now. Our experience ranges from small private residences, large estates, athletic fields, community entrances and commercial buildings.

We pride ourselves in staying on the cutting edge of irrigation advancements. We are always educating ourselves with training, updating our certifications and getting any new staff fully certified. You'll find us to be one of the most experienced and highly certified firms in the State.

We welcome your call whether it's a question, need for service or repair, an inquiry about designing or installing an irrigation or lighting system. We'd be honored to put our experience to work for you. Call us at 888-771-4070 for a complimentary consultation.

Testimonials

Sprinkler System Repair of an Existing System

We utilized Atlantic Lighting & Irrigation for a repair of the back flow preventer and spring system start up. Workers were professional and knew what they were doing. They worked quickly but not in a reckless manner. They identified several issues with the sprinkler system and were able to come back the following day and resolve them in a satisfactory manner. They also provided “education” about sprinkler heads and overall system use that had not been provided by previous vendors. I plan to utilize them again for future needs.

-Bowie, Maryland

Sprinkler System Plan and Installation

We were delighted with the installation. Your team is obviously skilled in what you do, and this makes this purchase experience a very good one. The installers repaired my lawn after the irrigation system was installed, and then oriented us to how the system operates. We will recommend Atlantic Lighting & Irrigation to others.

-Clarksville, Maryland

Sprinkler System Plan and Installation

Wonderful, you were punctual, informative and extremely professional!!

-Melissa S. Clinton, Maryland

Sprinkler System Plan and Installation

I really appreciate your work. If I could give you more than 5 stars I would!

-Walter T., Fort Washington, Maryland

Outdoor Lighting Plan and Installation

You guys could not have been better.

-Tom A

Sources:

EPA – WaterSense Partners Resource Guide