

Drought Irrigation Schedule



Purpose



You can reduce your outdoor water use by restricting your watering schedule.

Santa Clara County is in a severe drought. In April 2022, Valley Water implemented a restricted watering schedule, limiting irrigation of non-functional lawns to two days or less per week. While this reduction in outdoor water use is not intended to keep a lush, green lawn, it will allow you to maintain your landscape while reducing watering by a third. Your water retailer may have a more stringent watering schedule depending on the season; Please visit valleywater.org/find-my-retailer to find your water retailer and learn about their latest watering requirements.

To use the drought irrigation schedule*, find the sprinkler or drip type that most closely resembles your system. Use the suggested watering times as a starting point and then adjust as necessary, keeping within the two day per week schedule. Signs of stress on your landscape will be expected, but keep an eye out for runoff and pooling, and reduce watering times to save even more water.

Irrigation Tips



Sprinkler head adjustment for less water waste.

Sun vs. Shade: Plants growing in shady areas (north/east side of your home) will generally require 50% less water than the same plants in full sun. To account for this, adjust your watering schedule to apply less water.

Cycle and Soak Method: Clay soils, commonly found in Santa Clara County, absorb water slowly. Sprinklers and drip irrigation may apply water at a faster rate than the soil can absorb, causing runoff. Instead of setting your schedule to water one long cycle per day, set it to water multiple shorter cycles per day, with 30-minute breaks in between cycles, as the schedule on the next page indicates. This cycle and soak method will allow the water to soak in and encourage deeper roots.

Time of Day: The optimum time to water your lawn or landscape is before 7 AM and after 7 PM when the sun is down, and the temperature is cooler.

Slope: Water plants on slopes more frequently for shorter durations to prevent run off waste. The cycle and soak method is effective for sloped areas.

Trees: Tree watering is not limited to two days per week. Please maintain healthy trees with adequate irrigation. Programmed irrigation controller scheduling may not allow for the infrequent deep watering required for tree health. Supplemental manual irrigation may be needed.

Potted Plants and Vegetable Gardens: Potted plants and vegetable garden watering is not limited to a two day per week irrigation schedule.

*This schedule assumes your yard is located in Santa Clara County, and your established landscape is in full sun with clay soil and no slope.

More Ways to Save



wood chip mulch retains soil moisture.

Mulching: Add mulch to all planting areas to ensure there is a 2-3 inch layer. This will retain moisture and keep soil temperatures cooler, improve soil quality, and plant health.

Lawn Care: Remember to aerate lawns once per year, which will reduce soil compaction and improve lawn health. Also, mow lawns to 2.5 to 3 inches to improve the quality of the lawn and reduce water demand.

Check Irrigation System: A few times each year, inspect your sprinklers and drip while they are on. Look for sprinklers that are broken, bent or misaligned, in addition to holes or breaks in the drip system. Inspecting and repairing will help keep your landscape healthy and save water. For help, sign up for a free Water Wise Outdoor Survey by visiting watersavings.org.

Adapted and reprinted courtesy of Contra Costa Water District

Irrigation Schedule

Sprinkler/ Drip Type	Lawn		General Landscape (Shrubs and moderate water plants)		Low Water Landscape	
	Pop-Up / Fixed-Spray Sprinkler	Impact /Rotor Sprinkler and Multi-stream/MP Rotator Sprinkler	Drip Emitter/In-Line Drip	Micro-spray	Drip Emitter/In-Line Drip	Micro-spray
January	2 days, 1 cycle, 5 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 15 minutes	1 day 1 cycle, 13 minutes	1 day 2 cycles, 4 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 6 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 2 minutes
February	2 days, 1 cycle, 7 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 15 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 7 minutes	1 day, 2 cycles, 4 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 6 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 5 minutes
March	2 days, 1 cycle, 9 minutes	2 days, 2 cycle, 18 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 16 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 5 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 16 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 6 minutes
April	2 days, 2 cycles, 5 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 22 minutes	1 day, 3 cycles, 13 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 4 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 10 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 3 minutes
May	2 days, 2 cycles, 6 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 20 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 13 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 6 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 13 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 4 minutes
June	2 days, 2 cycles, 7 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 22 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 15 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 3 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 15 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 5 minutes
July	2 days, 3 cycles, 5 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 24 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 11 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 5 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 16 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 6 minutes
August	2 days, 2 cycles, 7 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 33 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 15 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 3 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 15 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 5 minutes
September	2 days, 2 cycles, 6 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles, 17 minutes	1 day, 3 cycles, 15 minutes	1 day, 4 cycles, 5 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 11 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 4 minutes
October	2 days, 2 cycles, 5 minutes	2 days, 2 cycles, 18 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 16 minutes	1 day, 2 cycles, 5 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 16 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 6 minutes
November	2 days, 1 cycle, 9 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 15 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 7 minutes	1 day, 2 cycles, 4 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 3 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 5 minutes
December	1 day, 1 cycle, 7 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 15 minutes	2 days, 1 cycle, 4 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 4 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 3 minutes	1 day, 1 cycle, 2 minutes

Notes:

- Drip Emitters/In-Line Drip schedule based on emitters that apply 0.8 inches of water per hour.
- If you do not have a Weather Based Smart Irrigation Controller, you will need to adjust the watering schedule manually in your controller's program according to the month. Visit <https://delivr.com/2mryb> for more information.
- Sprinkler irrigation times are not included for the General and Low Water Landscapes as these should be on drip irrigation or micro-spray for water use efficiency and the health of the landscape.
- Visit watersavings.org to learn about incentives and services to save water.