



**Rain gauges** are devices designed to measure how much rain was received at a specific location over a designated period of time. Rain gauges are easy to use and can act as an accurate way to measure how much water plants are getting over time. Use your rain gauge to monitor how much rain was received at your house. Keep track of weekly rainfall totals to determine whether your lawn needs additional water.

## How to Use a Rain Gauge

**Step 1** - Clean your rain gauge to begin use. Allow it to dry thoroughly before using it.

**Step 2** - Place your rain gauge in the ground vertically at the location you want to measure the rainfall. Place the rain gauge away from any buildings and trees or plants. Make sure your rain gauge is secure so it won't tip over.

**Step 3** - Determine the period of time that you want to measure the rainfall. Some check their rain gauges at the same time each week to get an idea of the total rainfall for a week. Others check their rain gauges after each rainfall.

**Step 4** - Wait for the rain to end completely before checking the gauge. Rain gauges measure rain in tenths of inches.

**Step 5** - Write down in a notebook the amount of rain in your rain gauge in order to track the amount of rain you receive.

**Step 6** - Empty your rain gauge, and return it to its location so it's ready to collect the next round of rain.

## Did You Know?

*For an average non-conserving home, approximately 30% of daily water use is devoted to outdoor uses.* Taking small steps towards efficiency in outdoor water use can reduce water waste and still provide enough water for plants and turf. Outdoor water efficiency is especially important during the hot summer months when as much as 50% of outdoor water consumed is used for watering lawns and gardens.

- A typical Illinois lawn needs about 1-1½ inches of water each week, including rain, according to [www.gardenillinois.com](http://www.gardenillinois.com).
- In Illinois, cool season grasses can go dormant during hot, dry weather without watering and recover when growing conditions improve in the late summer or early autumn.
- Overwatering causes runoff, wastes water, and carries fertilizers and other chemicals into the sewer system which end up in our waterways.
- Have an irrigation system? Don't you hate it when you're not home and your system is scheduled to run even though it's raining? Rain sensors, which turn off your system in rainy weather and help compensate for natural rainfall, can be added to your system for as little as \$25-\$50. It can pay for itself in one season – easily!

For more information on water conservation, please contact the CWLP Energy Experts at 789-2070 or visit [www.cwlp.com](http://www.cwlp.com), click on the Energy Services tab.



## City Water, Light & Power



## LAWN CARE Water Use

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## Preserving Water

### While Caring for your Lawn

Research has shown that on average about half of the water used outdoors for a single-family home during the course of a year will be put onto the landscape. If we considered watering the average-sized lawn of 1/5 of an acre with the recommended amount of water of 1" per week, that lawn would require more than 65,000 gallons of water for the 3 months of summer. Here are some ideas that might help cut down on your family's water usage but still maintain a healthy lawn.

- **Water only what grows.** Make sure the heads are adjusted properly to avoid watering sidewalks and driveways. A properly adjusted sprinkler head should spray large droplets of water, not a fine mist, to minimize evaporation and wind drift.
- **Let your lawn go dormant** during the hottest months by not watering. Cool-season grasses stop growing at temperatures above 90° F. Grass will grow back in the cooler months of fall.

## Efficient Watering



### Timing



- **Monitor rainfall.** Don't water the lawn if rains are expected soon. Keep track of rainfall with your rain gauge. Don't apply more water than what is necessary.
- **Water early in the day** or after sunset when it is cooler – avoid midday watering to minimize evaporation. Early morning watering is best to avoid the potential for root rot or mildew.

### Frequency



- **Water every 5-7 days (if no rain).** A soaking rain can extend the period to 10-14 days.
- **Water as infrequently as possible.** Water thoroughly so moisture gets down to the depth of the roots. Avoid frequent watering as this promotes shallower root systems and weeds.



### Amount

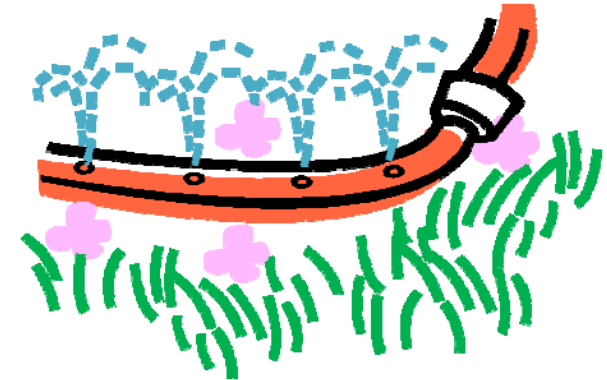
- **Depends on your lawn.** Cool-season grasses need about 1-1 1/2 inches of water per week.
- **Avoid overwatering.** Overwatering does more than deplete the water supply; it also makes plants prone to pests and adds to storm water runoff, which can pollute our waterways.
- **Consider drip irrigation.** When it comes to watering individual trees, flowerbeds, potted containers or other non-grassy areas, you can apply water directly to the roots with low volume drip irrigation. This will reduce water waste through evaporation or runoff and keep weeds from growing.

## Efficient Mowing

- **Mow at the highest blade setting.** For most cool-season lawns, a height of between 3" to 3 1/2" is considered adequate. Keeping the grass slightly higher will increase shade on the soil, encourage deeper rooting and reduce evaporation.

## Efficient Fertilizing

- **Fertilize once a year** in October after the rainy season to allow fertilizer to be absorbed by the roots. Always use a slow release organic fertilizer. Excess fertilizer applications increase water consumption.



### Other Programs

Energy Services Office has a variety of programs designed to help our customers reduce energy usage and save money. To learn more visit [www.cwlp.com](http://www.cwlp.com) and click on the Energy Services tab.

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