

Growing Green

Watering lawns and vegetables is best done early in the morning before it gets hot. First, this eliminates how much water is lost to evaporation. In the afternoon, when the sun is the hottest, water evaporates quickly, resulting in less water reaching the roots of the plant. Second, make sure you water at the base of the plant, and avoid hitting the leaves. Again, this gets the water where it's needed, and keeps it off the leaves where water droplets can actually magnify the sun's light and burn leaves! Also, some plants develop fungus on their leaves if they get too wet.



It's also important to be smart about how much water is used. Different plants all have different watering schedules, and it's important not to over or under water. Drip irrigation systems use a minimal amount of water and apply the water right at the roots at a rate that the soil can absorb. This eliminates most of the wasted water that sloshes everywhere when a hose dumps gallons on one area instantaneously. The EPA states that almost 50% of water is wasted when watering with a hose, watering can, or sprinkler. Drip irrigation also only waters the plants that you want, which eliminates the weeds getting water. Less weeding!



Also, having rain barrels is a great way to reduce water consumption by outdoor landscaping. Outdoor landscaping (lawns, gardens, etc.) consumes over 59% of average residential water usage! By collecting rain water you are not only reducing domestic water use, your plants will benefit by having all of the beneficial micro-nutrients that is found in rain.

Gardening requires tools and supplies, so consider taking advantage of affordable re-use and purchase-needed equipment at local garage sales or through the MSU surplus store!