



# Landscape Watering Guide

On average, one-third of water bills across the country are due to outdoor watering. Homes with automated irrigation systems are more likely to overwater, but simple steps can reduce waste, lower bills, and conserve limited water resources.

## Start Simple

- **Outdoor watering in Georgia is only permitted before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. year-round.** Water early in the morning and late at night when less water will be lost to evaporation.
- Prevent overwatering. Most lawns in Georgia only need 1 inch of water per week.
- Inspect landscapes after irrigating. If there is runoff or pooling water, adjust your system for shorter or less frequent cycles.
- Know your plants and shrubs. Newly planted vegetation may require up to 1 inch of water per week for a healthy start. Established ones can thrive on as little as 1 inch every two to three weeks.
- Hand water small or isolated areas to limit waste.
- Let rain do the work! Turn off or adjust irrigation timers based on the weather. Consider using a rain gauge to help guide how much water your landscape needs, based on rainfall.



## Dig In More with These Tips

- Regularly check hoses and faucet bibs for cracks and water leaks, and repair them quickly. Unexpected wet spots may also mean a leak.
- Install a WaterSense-labeled smart irrigation controller for your system. Not only can they manage watering schedules, they override scheduled cycles when sufficient soil moisture is reached, limiting waste and runoff. Controllers can even adjust based on weather forecasts.
- Drought-tolerant grasses, plants and trees suited for our climate create the best conditions for healthy landscapes.
- Tackling turf? Grow a waterwise lawn with types like TifTuf Bermuda, Tahoma-31 and Celebration.
- Drip irrigation applies water directly to plant roots, costs less to install and uses less water. Consider installing them in your planting beds.
- Winterize irrigation systems. Turn off your timer, disconnect hoses and drain or blow out the system. Hand water during colder months as needed.



## How Much & How Often

The goal of lawn watering is to apply enough to reach and soak the roots. Our region's mainly clay soils absorb water slowly – up to 0.5 inches of water per hour. Over saturating soil leads to pooling and runoff. Try the turfgrass watering calculator at [TifTufBermuda.com](http://TifTufBermuda.com) and the tips below to save.

### Use Your (Sprinkler) Head

Each sprinkler system applies water at different rates. There are two main types of sprinkler heads. Observe how your yard accepts water and adjust your system as needed. Be sure to pause between cycles for one hour.



Rotor

Rotor sprinkler heads apply 0.25 to 0.5 inches of water an hour and usually run up to 20 minutes before runoff occurs. If your system applies 0.5 inches per hour, set your timer for six 20-minute cycles over one week.



Spray

Spray sprinkler heads apply 1 to 2 inches of water per hour and usually run 6 to 8 minutes before runoff occurs. If your system applies 2 inches per hour, set your timer for five 6-minute cycles over the course of a week.

### Test Your System

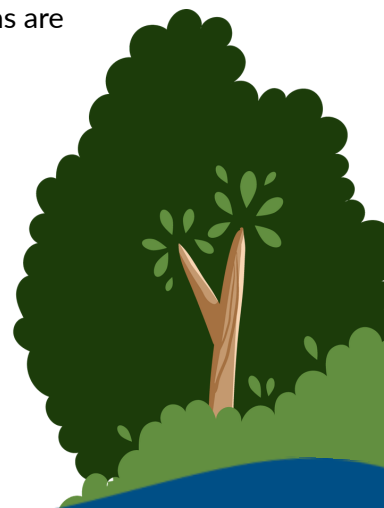
- Place empty tuna cans (or similar) around the yard and run each system zone for 15 minutes.
- After, measure the amount of water in the cans with a ruler.



Now, let's calculate and check:

- If there is 0.25 inches of water in the can, one hour is needed to water 1 inch.
- To maintain absorption, split watering times into two or more sessions. Wait for one hour in between cycles for the water to soak in.
- A good soak should measure 6-10 inches deep. Use a long spade or screwdriver to check depth. It will slide easily through wet soil and be nearly impossible to push if the soil is still dry.
- An easy way to check if your lawn needs water is to walk on it. If your footprint stays or the blades don't bounce back, it's time to irrigate. Other signs are wilting or a dull discoloration.

**Remember!**  
Most lawns in Georgia only need 1 inch of water per week.



Everything You Do  
Makes a Difference!



For ways to save, visit  
[northgeorgiawater.org](http://northgeorgiawater.org).