



# Conserving Water

## Solutions for Your Landscape

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**  
IFAS Extension

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/water>

## Watering Your Lawn

Many homeowners overwater their lawns, damaging or even killing turf. Frequent watering encourages roots to stay in the top few inches of soil. Watering less frequently, for longer periods of time, will encourage deeper rooting. Turf depends on deep roots to stay healthy and to survive dry spells.

It's important to water only when your lawn needs it, to avoid wasting water. A lawn will tell you when it's time to water by showing at least one of the three signs of wilt.

### What Are the Three Wilt Signs?

There are three signs of wilt that will alert you when irrigation is needed.

1. Folding leaf blades. Leaf blades will fold in half lengthwise when the lawn is water-stressed. The grass does this to try to minimize leaf area and water loss.
2. Blue-gray color. A thirsty lawn's color is blue-gray rather than a deep green.
3. Footprints remain visible. When footprints or tire tracks remain visible on your lawn, it's time to water. It means that the grass is dry and is not springing back.

### How Much Wilt Is OK?

Unless rain is forecast in the next twenty-four hours, irrigate your lawn only when 30 to 50 percent of it shows wilt.

### How Much Do I Water?

You want to get the maximum amount of water to your root zone without drowning your grass. In most Florida soils, this means you apply 1/2 to 3/4 inches of water.

When faced with watering restrictions, homeowners are often tempted to apply more water at each application to compensate for not being able to water as often. Water that runs off or moves below the root system is not absorbed and is wasted.

Not only is irrigating to the point of run-off a waste of water, it can also potentially cause pollution by washing fertilizer and pesticide chemicals into the groundwater.



The best thing you can do for your lawn is to water when your lawn needs it, at a rate the soil can absorb. Your lawn will be healthier and so will Florida's environment.

### How Do I Program My Irrigation Controller?

For instructions on how to program your irrigation system's controller, see "Setting Your Irrigation Controller."

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