
“THE PUDDLE”

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY NEWSLETTER

June 2022

Proper Lawn Watering – have a healthy lawn while saving money and water

Twice a week watering restrictions will be in effect on July 1st, but it does not mean that you need to water your lawn every time you are allowed. In fact, watering too much can encourage shallow roots and disease, weakening plants. Over-watering also increases the risk of pollution; stresses water supplies, and wastes time and money.

When and how should you water lawn?

Generally, your lawn needs about **one inch of water per week**.

Step 1: Install a rain gauge and check it once each day.

Step 2: Once per week, apply only the amount of water needed to make up the one-inch difference not supplied by natural rainfall. For example, if rainfall produced one half inch of water during the week, then only one half inch of irrigation is needed to make up the difference. One long, slow watering each week is best.

Step 3: Water during the early morning hours to reduce evaporation and risk of plant disease.

With automatic, in-ground sprinkler systems, be sure you know how to turn the system off when it is raining or at other times when watering is not needed. Contact your irrigation professional for assistance.

Watch the lawn for early signs of drought stress, which include:

- Development of a bluish-green coloration
- Rolling or folding of leaf blades
- Footprints remain visible on the lawn for several minutes after walking on it

At this time, you should apply one inch of water to the lawn. Continue to monitor rainfall with your rain gauge and look for recurring signs of drought stress.

Additional water conservation tips

- Measure sprinkler output, at least once each season, with a shallow can or rain gauge to verify the amount of water actually being applied. Adjust the flow rate or running time until you get it right.
- Avoid watering driveways and streets. Contact your irrigation professional, if necessary, for help with re-positioning sprinkler heads.
- Leave the lawn clippings on the lawn. This builds organic matter content, which holds more water.
- Address soil compaction problems. Restricted root zones are more prone to drought stress and soil runoff is increased, wasting water.
- Reduce lawn area—especially those trouble spots. Options include mulched beds of drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, groundcovers; rock gardens, and use of crushed stone or other permeable paving options.

Consider this: one inch of water over a 1,000 sq. ft. area (10 ft. by 100ft.) is about 625 gallons. For this same amount of water, you could:

- Do 12 loads of laundry
- Take 25 showers
- Provide 10,000 glasses of water

For more information visit our website

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Some Thoughts on Bottled Water

Bottled water, bottled water, bottled water.....you see it, or evidence of it, everywhere. It is in every store and every soft drink dispensing machine, it is featured prominently in advertising, it seems to be in everybody's refrigerator and everyone's hand, and the empty bottles make up a significant percentage of the litter that despoils the environment from roadsides to shorelines. Just a few years ago, it replaced soft drinks at the top of the heap in America; we now drink on a per capita basis 39.3 gallons of bottled water and 38.5 gallons of soft drink. Of course, as you would expect, water industry professionals, including those who work in the North Kingstown Water Department.... well we just don't get it. Folks who swear by bottled water say it is just better tasting and safer for you. But is that true, or is it just good marketing?

A serious search of the internet will lead to truths that water industry professionals already know. First bottled water is not safer than tap water as the public drinking water industry is held to strict standards of safety through the EPA generated regulations it is governed by, and the FDA generated regulations that the bottled water industry is held to are very similar. The big difference is actual on the “Right To Know” side of things, public reporting requirement standards for tap water are much stronger than for bottled water. Blind taste test after blind taste test show that when you compare bottled water to non-chlorinated tap water; well, no one can consistently tell the difference. So maybe it is just good advertising then.

To put all this to the test, the North Kingstown Water Department did its own little experiment. We took samples of water from our system, water from Poland Springs home delivery, and water from a convenience store purchase, specifically Dasani water, and sent them all to an independent laboratory that specializes in drinking water analysis. The results were both interesting and just what might be expected. First, all three water samples met every Primary Drinking Water Standard as defined by EPA regulations. However, Dasani water, with a pH of 5.6, did not meet the suggested guidelines for the secondary (non-enforceable) standards that the EPA outlines. The next interesting fact is indicated by the test results is something most folks might not think about. The two bottled water samples were essentially stripped of all natural mineral content, which may sound good, but don't forget that humans do need some of these essential minerals. Of course that reality leads us to the bottled water industry's little secret – much of the water that is being sold with fancy labels and exotic names does not come from mineral rich natural springs, it comes from highly filtered tap water. Yes, that's right, tap water! Another interesting factoid connected to this is straight out of the International Bottled Water Association; when everything is taken into consideration, from the plastic bottle manufacturing process right up until its filled and shipped to a store, **on average it takes bottled water companies 1.39 liters of water to make one liter of water.** Think about that for a while!

So finally what is the deal with bottled water? Well it all comes down to profit margins, and the bottom line is the bottom line. Bottled water makes big money for folks like Nestle Foods, who own Poland Springs, and Pepsico, who own Dasani. Here are some true costs to consider; one gallon of home delivery Poland Springs Water costs consumers in NK on average \$1.49, one gallon of convenience store Dasani Water costs a remarkable \$6.95, and one gallon of North Kingstown tap water – 1/3 of a cent. So that 39.3 gallons per person translates to about \$59 of Poland Springs water, or \$273 of Dasani Water, or 13 cents worth of good safe award-winning North Kingstown tap water. So buy a water bottle and tell those big food and drink conglomerates what they can do with their fancy labels and exotic names.
