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# “THE PUDDLE”

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY NEWSLETTER

March 2023

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## Evaluate your landscape watering needs and methods

### Tips on reducing needs and improving methods

As the growing season draws near, it is a good time to plan for ways to conserve water in our home landscape. Residential water consumption increases by 50% or more during the growing season mostly due to lawn watering. According to the Irrigation Association, many homeowners over-irrigate their lawns. We can look for ways to reduce landscape watering needs, as well as improve our watering methods.

#### Reduce landscape watering needs

- Reduce lawn area—especially marginal areas where the soil is sandy, shallow, compacted or steep.
- Renovate lawn with drought-tolerant grasses such as fescue grasses.
- Create areas of native and drought-tolerant plants. Consider a rock garden in drought prone areas.
- Use mulch and compost to improve soil organic matter. Leave the lawn clippings on the lawn.
- Use permeable paving materials to create walkways, patios and as a protective cover in trouble spots.
- Create shaded areas.
- Consider allowing your lawn to go naturally dormant during a prolonged drought.

#### Use water conservation tools:

- Use a rain gauge to track weekly rain fall. Lawns need about 1 inch of water each week to remain actively growing. Apply only the additional water needed to make up the difference.
- Install rain barrels or cisterns to collect rain water.
- Use soaker hoses or install a drip irrigation system for garden areas. These methods efficiently apply water at the plant root zone and greatly reduce evaporation loss.

Visit the URI Healthy Landscapes Program website, [www.healthylandscapes.org](http://www.healthylandscapes.org).

**Give your automatic, in-ground sprinkler system regular check-ups.** Work with a licensed irrigation professional to assist you with the following:

- The point of connection is the supply line for the irrigation system. All connections, fittings and valves should be inspected for leaks and proper operation, including the correct operating pressure. Excessive pressure can result in excessive water, waste, and damaged parts.
- Sprinkler valves open and close to allow for operation of each zone. This is programmed into the controller and should be inspected regularly. Malfunction of these valves can lead to excessive run times and flooding.
- Sprinkler heads should be checked for proper spacing and alignment, application rates and operating pressure – again, excessive pressure can result in excessive water and waste (including misting and over-spray). Move or cap sprinkler heads as needed to avoid watering paved or non-vegetated areas.
- Look for suspicious spots in your landscape that are much greener or consistently wet and muddy. This may be due to an underground leak or other malfunction.

Learn how to turn the system on and off manually. Do not set an automatic watering schedule.

- Use a rain gauge to measure weekly rain fall and water only the amount needed to make up 1 inch.
- Water once per week. Frequent light watering events encourage disease and shallow roots.
- Water early in the morning to reduce evaporation.
- Adjust flow rates to avoid runoff. Your irrigation professional may need to assist you. Again, check that the operating pressures of the system are not excessive.

#### Upgrade your system with conservation technology.

- Install a rain shut-off device to prevent watering when it rains. These inexpensive devices save water and money.
- Consider "smart" technology — a controller or soil moisture sensor that schedules irrigation based on weather or soil moisture conditions.

For more information about "smart" conservation technology visit the Irrigation Association website, [www.irrigation.org](http://www.irrigation.org)

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## Water Supply and Use in the United States

Water covers approximately 70 percent of the Earth's surface, but less than 1 percent of that is available for human use. The world must share this small amount for agricultural, domestic, commercial, industrial, and environmental needs. Across the globe, water consumption has tripled in the last 50 years. Managing the supply and availability of water is one of the most critical natural resource issues facing the United States and the world.

Homes use more than half of publicly supplied water in the United States, which is significantly more than is used by either business or industry. A family of four can use as much as 400 gallons of water every day. Those amounts used can increase depending on location; for example, the arid West has some of the highest per capita residential water use because of landscape irrigation.

With water use in the United States increasing every year, many regions are starting to feel the pressure. In the last five years, nearly every region of the country has experienced water shortages. WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to help homeowners and businesses improve water efficiency and reduce their costs by promoting efficient irrigation technologies such as weather-based irrigation controllers and soil moisture sensors. For more information, visit <[www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)>.

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY IS PROUD TO BE A WATERSENSE PARTNER



*Please be aware*

### Semi-annual hydrant flushing will be scheduled for Spring 2023

Hydrant flushing is an important component of North Kingstown's distribution system maintenance and is extremely important to providing safe and clean drinking water. Flushing of water mains is one component of North Kingstown's overall distribution system maintenance program. The flushing of mains removes sediment that normally accumulates in water pipes that could produce bacteria if not removed and aids in the reduction of discolored water incidences.

Is your property in the Special Flood Hazard Area? Do you need flood insurance? What are the rules for building in the floodplain? If you would like to know the answers to these questions or want to learn more about any of these topics, the Town of North Kingstown has information available that may help. Check our website at <http://northkingstown.org/212/Flooding-Flood-Insurance-Information>. You'll find information about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), review evacuation route mapping as well as the Flood Insurance Rate Maps and find out about flood preparedness and protection. The web page includes helpful links to other state and federal resources as well. The town also has copies of FEMA Elevation Certificates on all buildings constructed or substantially improved in the floodplain since 1995. The North Kingstown Free Library also has a repository of flood-related information available. You can call the Planning Department with any floodplain questions at 268-1571.