

Efficient use of water for outdoor irrigation

Irrigation equipment

» Use drip irrigation for lawns only when installation has been certified.



» A timer used to operate an irrigation system must be set for a maximum of two hours, or be linked to a moisture sensor or rain sensor.

Water only when needed

» Don't water when it is predicted to rain or is already raining.



» Ideally water between 5-10 am.

Water only where needed

» Water only plants and grass (not buildings and pathways).



Following the above suggestions will be taken as compliant with the requirement for water efficient outdoor irrigation under the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code.

Water requirements for different plant types across seasons*

Plant type	General watering schedule	Approximate irrigation water requirements		
		Wet season	Dry season	
Water smart grasses	Regular, thorough watering	5 mm weekly	20 mm weekly	
Mixed plantings (perennial flowers and tender shrubs)	Occasional watering	25 mm every two weeks	30 mm weekly	
Native plants and shrubs and smaller trees (< 5 cm trunk diameter)	Infrequent, thorough watering	10 mm every two weeks	10 mm weekly	

Check with your local water service provider for water restrictions that may apply in your local area.

* Actual water requirements and frequency will depend on the type of plant, geographical location, climate characteristics and soil type.

Signs your grass needs water

- » Your grass is changing colour.
- » The soil below is difficult to penetrate using a sharp object.
- » Your grass doesn't spring back after being walked on.

Some features of Waterwise plants

- » Small, light coloured leaves.
- » Hairy or tough leaf surfaces.
- » Deep root systems.



Tips for a water efficient garden

Check irrigation system regularly

- » Look for leaks and blocked nozzles.
- » Check the watering rate and distribution by doing a tuna can test.



Only mow when necessary

» Keep grass at least 3 cm high, and cut outside the heat of the day, to prevent it drying out. In Queensland, an isolating valve, tap or backflow prevention device must be in place before installing an irrigation system that will be connected to the water service. This is to protect the drinking water supply from contamination.

Plant zoning

» Group plants with similar water requirements together, e.g. different zones for vegetables, grass and shrubs.



Encourage deep root growth

» Water at a slower rate, for longer time and less frequently. This can make plants 'hardier.'

Water uniformly

- » Space emitters to apply water evenly.
- » Use the same type of emitters in the same zone.



Use mulch

» Mulch should be kept away from plant stems and, generally, be at least 5cm deep to reduce evaporation.

Sprinkler irrigation rates This table can be used as a guide to program your controller.	Dripline	Micro spray	Pop-up/fixed spray	Rotary	Gear drive rotor
Approximate watering rate (per hour) Suggested run time to apply 10 mm	15–20 mm 30–40 min	35–45 mm 13–16 min	35–45 mm 13–16 min	10–15 mm 40–60 min	10–20 mm 30–40 min

The tuna can test

A tuna can test lets you know the rate you are applying water. Here's how to go about it:

- Randomly place 6–8 flat-bottomed cans, such as tuna or pet food cans (including close and several meters away from the sprinkler/emitters).
- Record the time it takes to fill the majority of the cans about 1cm this is about 10mm of water. You can use this information to determine how long to run the sprinklers to give your plants the water they need.

If the cans don't fill up evenly, individual nozzles may need adjustment.

