DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL

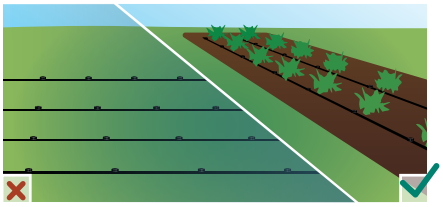
waterwise Queensland

Efficient irrigation for water conservation: guidelines for water efficient urban gardens and landscapes

Efficient use of water for outdoor irrigation

Irrigation equipment

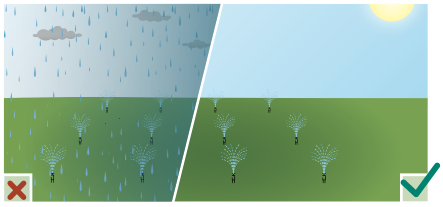
» Use drip irrigation for lawns only when installation has been certified.



» 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

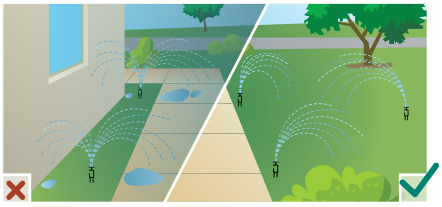
» Don't water when it is predicted to rain or is already raining.



» Ideally water between dusk and dawn.

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

To see the latest water restriction status, visit www.douglas.qld.gov.au

* Please note that during monsoonal wet season in the Douglas Shire, water requirements and frequency are often reduced.

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.

Queensland Government

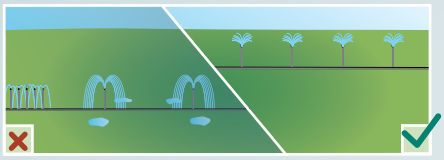
Tips for a water efficient garden

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.

Check irrigation system regularly

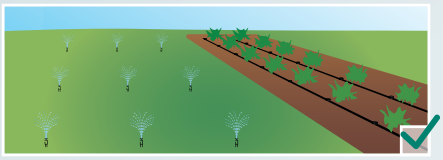
» Look for leaks and blocked nozzles.

» Check the watering rate and distribution by doing a tuna can test.



Plant zoning

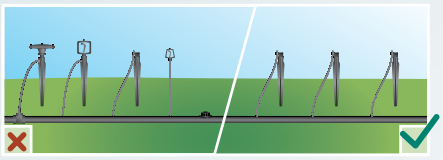
» Group plants with similar water requirements together, e.g. different zones for vegetables, grass and shrubs.



Water uniformly

» Space emitters to apply water evenly.

» Use the same type of emitters in the same zone.



Only mow when necessary

» Keep grass at least 3 cm high, and cut outside the heat of the day, to prevent it drying out.

Encourage deep root growth

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

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)	15–20 mm	35–45 mm	35–45 mm	10–15 mm	10–20 mm
Suggested run time to apply 10 mm	30–40 min	13–16 min	13–16 min	40–60 min	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:

1. Randomly place 6–8 flat-bottomed cans, such as tuna or pet food cans (including close and several meters away from the sprinkler/emitters).
2. 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.