

NEWS

▼ USE OF WATER

Be efficient watering your lawn or garden

CORINNE JACKSON
CONTRIBUTOR

It may seem odd to be talking water conservation in such a wet year, but it's really the best time to start thinking about our water use.

While the Okanagan's 2011 spring and summer are cool and wet, 2010 was a different story as parts of the valley narrowly missed a serious drought. So why wait for a crisis to plan ahead?

The Okanagan is a water-short region, with less water available per person than almost anywhere in Canada.

As the population of this valley continues to grow, it could affect our water supply.

At the same time, recent studies conducted for the Okanagan Basin Water Board have shown that climate change may also impact our supply.

It makes sense then to take this time to think wisely about our water use and find ways to make water work in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The Okanagan's lakes, vineyards, orchards and golf courses—iconic images for this valley—are examples of "working water," providing an economic benefit to the valley.

The agricultural industry has made great strides to be more water-efficient and this work is continuing.



Even a number of local golf courses, enjoyed by locals and tourists alike, are looking to save water, changing their landscape to native plants and/or using treated wastewater for spray irrigation.

However, there is significant room to make water work better in our personal landscapes—in particular, on our lawns.

In all, 24 per cent of all water we take out of Okanagan lakes and rivers is used by residents outside.

This is the second largest human use of water, most of it being used in the summer on our lawns and gardens.

While one can make the case that water on the garden is used to grow food—and thus is working water, lawns are mostly cosmetic features.

It's interesting to note that our water systems were built decades ago for agriculture—not residential use.

And as residential demand on these systems has grown so has the need for costly water treatment to meet drinking water regulations.

As a result, we're using some of the best, most highly-purified drinking

water in the world to irrigate our lawns.

Some have asked why we don't just build larger reservoirs.

But building infrastructure is costly. The fact is, there is room for simple changes in the way we use water that, if implemented, could create significant water savings—and tax savings.

If you water your lawn, here are some easy tips to make water work:

- Water during the coolest part of the day to prevent evaporation. A good rule of thumb is 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

- Water only when it's needed. Most lawns only need 2.5 centimetres (one inch) of water per week—about the depth of a tuna can. Watering deeply and less often promotes deep, healthy root growth. If this isn't working, then the issue is unlikely how much water the lawn is getting. You may need to top dress or aerate.

- Leave grass clippings as mulch on your lawn. They help feed the lawn and retain moisture, requiring less water and reducing evaporation.

- Position your sprinkler to only water your lawn or garden, not pavement.



LAKE COUNTRY resident Deb Sippel uses a watering can on the plants that need it. Handwatering is a great way to make water work, allowing you to target only those plants that truly need the moisture.

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Be water wise...

We are proud to be part of a progressive water use community. Visit the City's Water Smart website and/or okwaterwise.ca for water saving tips and information on the latest irrigation initiatives.



Your Irrigation Efficiency Partner

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Sweet corn sale fundraiser delayed

The Kelowna City Band's Sweet Corn Sale has been postponed due to poor growing weather throughout the province.

Fresh Chilliwack corn will now be available on Saturday, Aug. 13, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., from various locations in Kelowna, West Kelowna and Winfield.

Buy some corn and support your local musicians at either of these locations: Canadian Tire, Liquor Store by Coopers in the Mission, Trinity Baptist Church at Spall and Springfield.

Snowbirds impact traffic

Vehicle access to Knox Mountain Drive will be restricted Monday, Aug. 1, from 3 to 6 p.m., to accommodate the Canadian Forces Snowbirds airshow. Pedestrian access will be maintained.

The airshow will take place from 5 to 5:30 p.m. over Okanagan Lake.

The preferred viewing areas for the show will be from Kerry Park to Waterfront Park.



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