

# Smart watering conserves water and saves money

Summer heat can be harmful in various ways. People and pets can quickly succumb to the summer sun, which can cause sunburn, heat exhaustion and heat stroke when people and their animals spend too much time outdoors without adequate protection.

Landscapes are also vulnerable to summer heat, which can quickly spoil the most lush lawns and robust gardens. Effective watering can help lawns and gardens withstand summer heat, but improper watering can deprive landscapes of the water they need to survive. Homeowners concerned about their lawns and gardens surviving the summer can take the following approach to conserve water, save money and maintain their landscapes.

• **Start early.** Homeowners may feel that the hottest times of the day are when lawns and gardens will be most in need of water, so that's the best time to set sprinklers or grab the hose and get to work. But in many areas, watering between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., when summer temperatures tend to peak, can be both wasteful and ineffective.

That's because watering between those hours will cause much of the water to quickly evaporate, robbing lawns and gardens of the water they need to withstand the heat. Homeowners who water when water is most likely to evaporate may feel they need to water more, and that only wastes water.

It's best to consult a local landscaping professional in your area to determine the best time to water each day, but in many regions the best time to water is between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m., when temperatures are generally lower, the sun is not at its peak and winds are not as strong.

• **Place sprinklers correctly.** If you do not have an in-ground irrigation system and don't intend to install one, you will likely use lawn sprinklers to water the lawn. When placing these sprinklers, turn them on and then document their trajectory before moving on to the next area. You want to make sure the water from the sprinklers is not landing on sidewalks, patios or streets, especially if your community typically institutes drought restrictions that limit how much you can water.

In such instances, you'll need to make the best use of the water you're allowed to use, so make sure none of it is watering the driveway.

• **Let well-fed lawns go dormant during drought.** Lengthy droughts tend to be

accompanied by water restrictions, and such restrictions can frustrate homeowners who don't want to see all of the hard work they've put in to this point go to waste. But grass that has thus far been well cared for can withstand drought

and still recover when rains once again fall and temperatures cool come autumn. If you plan to let the lawn go dormant, keep kids, pets and visitors off the grass, as dormant lawns are highly susceptible to damage. Summer is an enjoy-

able time of year, but lawn and garden enthusiasts may be concerned for their properties when summer heat sets in. A few simple strategies can help lawns make it through the season unscathed.

## Exterior painting pointers

A fresh coat of paint on a home's exterior can give a property a vibrant new look. Whether you decide to go with a bold new color or repaint a house in an existing color, new paint can add some life to the exterior of your home.

Summer has long been considered the ideal season to paint home exteriors, but advancements in technology have made it easier to paint home exteriors later in the year. According to paint manufacturer Sherwin-Williams, traditional latex-based paints need temperatures above 60 F to cure properly. Sherwin-Williams also notes that one of the more common mistakes homeowners make when painting their homes' exteriors is to paint during times of the year when temperatures fluctuate greatly between the days and nights. When nighttime temperatures dip considerably lower than they were in the afternoon, dew will form and the paint can stop coalescing. When that happens, moisture gets into the uncured paint and surface staining and adhesion problems may result. So even if the temperature is a comfortable 60 F during the day, homeowners should avoid painting if the nighttime temperatures figure to drop considerably.

In addition to choosing the right time of year to paint, consider the following painting pointers to ensure your home's exterior gets the fresh look you are aiming for.

• **Monitor weather reports.** It's not just the temperature at night after you paint that should be monitored. Sherwin-Williams advises that the temperature should be in the suggested range and above the dew point for at least 48 hours after application so the paint film can form properly. So applying a fresh coat of paint on a beautiful autumn Saturday is not ideal if Sunday figures to bring the first hints of winter.

• **Don't skimp on quality.** Some paints are cost more than others, and homeowners working on a budget may be tempted to choose the least expensive option available. While price and quality are two different things, it's important that homeowners avoid choosing a paint solely because it is the least expensive option. Research paints before buying a particular one, emphasizing quality over cost. Today's paints last longer than the paints of yesteryear, so you likely won't need to paint your home's exterior again for a long time. A budget-friendly yet low-quality paint will not only make your home less appealing, but you will likely need to paint again sooner than you will if you go with a higher quality paint.

• **Don't paint to cover up a problem.** Rotting wood or siding is unsightly, and some homeowners think paint can cover up such a problem. But paint will not stick to rotten wood and siding, and the problem will still be noticeable after you paint. A fresh coat of paint is not the solution to rotten wood or siding. Consult a professional contractor if your home is experiencing such a problem.

A fresh coat of paint on your home's exterior can be a great way to improve your home's curb appeal. But it's important homeowners follow some of the same rules the pros adhere to when painting the exteriors of their homes.

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