

# Water for all... for ALWAYS



*Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*

This new education program, launched in May 2008, strives to answer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Town of Olds water and wastewater systems, water conservation, water use, water meters and billing, and other topics about water.

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## *How can I use less water outside?*

Most lawns receive far more water than they need for a healthy appearance. The key to watering lawns is to apply the water infrequently, yet thoroughly, creating a deep, well-rooted lawn that efficiently uses water stored in the soil. A good rule of thumb is to apply 1-inch (2.5 cm) of water once a week, before 9.00 am, to avoid excessive evaporation. Set your sprinkler up so that you avoid watering patios, driveways and sidewalks. Sweep your driveway and walkways instead of washing them with a hose. Check hoses and fittings regularly for leaks. Use rain barrels to capture rainwater for use in your garden. If you have a small garden, using rainwater and a watering can to water plants individually avoids waste.

## *How do I create a water-efficient Yard?*

Most people tend to mow too often and to cut the grass too short. For typical grass species, mowing grass to a height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches (6-8 cm) and never cutting more than one-third of the grass length will encourage longer roots and shade the soil, reducing its temperature and moisture loss from evaporation. Leave grass clippings on the lawn as they are an excellent source of vital nitrogen. Set your mower height to cut grass no lower than 2 1/2 to 3 inches (6-8 cm) for most types of grasses. Avoid cutting the grass when it is wet. Alter the direction you mow each time you cut the grass. Keep the blades of your mower sharp - dull blades tear the grass leaving it open to disease and heat stress.

Traditional landscape design creates a constant battle against drought conditions, weed infestation, insect damage, drainage problems, trodden down lawns, and damage due to salt and oily runoff from sidewalks. By taking advantage of plants which thrive under the various conditions which exist around your property, you can create a landscape that is dynamic, beautiful and easy to maintain. Plant drought-resistant plants and grasses which require little or no watering during hot, dry periods. Many commonly available plants (especially established perennials) require no more water than that supplied by Mother Nature. Plant trees and shrubs - a shaded landscape is cooler and therefore, retains more water. Trees and shrubs also provide natural wind breaks, reducing plant water loss from the drying effects of Alberta winds. (Some info is from CMHC's "Household Guide to Water Efficiency")

*Get more at [www.olds.ca](http://www.olds.ca)...*

See sample layouts of water-efficient gardens, including plant suggestions at the following link:  
<http://www.olds.ca/sustain.html>

For more information visit the **Olds Sustainable Living** page at [www.olds.ca](http://www.olds.ca)

*This information was also featured in the 3 June 2008 issue of the Olds Albertan*