

Managing Landscape Irrigation Runoff

Stormwater Fact – Protecting Our Water Quality

In arid environments like here in Arizona, watering your landscape vegetation is essential to maintain a beautifully refreshing yard. Most properties are plumbed into the City of Mesa (City) water supply system for use in landscape irrigation while others are connected to a flood irrigation system. If managed improperly, landscape and irrigation runoff can contain pollutants such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and sediment. The City has developed these guidelines addressing landscape and irrigation water in order to prevent and/or reduce the discharge of pollutants to the City's storm sewer system.

REMEMBER, ONLY RAIN IN THE STORM DRAIN

The purpose of the storm drain system is to protect against flooding and water damage by quickly removing rain water from our streets. This water gets **no treatment** and may ultimately drain into washes, lakes, retention basins, community parks, and can even make its way into the Salt and Gila rivers. This is why the City has ordinances and programs to reduce pollutants into our storm drains.



Although water from landscape and irrigation sources are allowed to be discharged to the City's storm sewer system, associated pollutants such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and sediment are prohibited. This is why it is important to remember - ***only rain in the storm drain.***

KNOW YOUR LANDSCAPE WATER SCHEDULE

Whether you use tap water or flood irrigation water to irrigate your plants, it is important that you know the watering schedule. You may need to adjust this schedule depending on the time of year to account for changing weather conditions. If rainfall is predicted or has recently occurred, it may be necessary for you to temporarily disconnect your landscape irrigation controller or cancel a delivery from your flood irrigation provider. This additional water may actually cause harm to your landscape and the additional cost would not serve any benefit and may just end up as runoff to the storm sewer system.



PESTICIDE, HERBICIDE, AND FERTILIZER APPLICATIONS

Use pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers only as directed. Do not apply these chemicals when rainfall is in the immediate forecast. In Arizona, rainfall is infrequent enough that you can apply these chemicals when needed at least three to four days before any forecasted rainfall.

Usage Tips

- Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Notice warning labels and use the least toxic chemicals available:
CAUTION - Slightly toxic
WARNING- Moderately toxic
DANGER - Poison - Highly toxic
- Store in covered secure location inaccessible to children or pets.
- Try spot applications. Instead of broad coverage of entire lawn or landscaping areas, apply only to problem areas.
- Do not over apply. Instead, use two applications rather than one excessive application that may runoff the area or wash away when irrigated.
- Use less potent chemicals. Avoid products that are toxic to fish and wildlife. When possible, use products that have short term effects.
- Seek assistance. If you have any questions regarding the purchasing or application of these chemical, contact a professional. You may avoid unnecessary or excessive chemical application. Some may even test your soil to determine how much and what kind of additives are needed.

- Prevent spills during application and while in storage.
- After use, dispose of container as directed. Triple rinse container and use rinse water as product. Dispose of rinsed container in recycling bin or trash. **DO NOT BURN OR BURY CONTAINER.**
- Avoid stockpiling these chemicals by purchasing only small quantities of that can be used up within a year through regular application.
- Use up small volumes of these chemicals or give what is left over to a responsible friend or neighbor in need of the material. Keep these in their original container when giving it away so that the label information is present.
- Never pour these chemicals down the drain or outdoor sewers, in streams or ponds, or dump on the ground as they will contaminate sewage treatment plants and/or endanger people or seriously damage the environment.
- If there is product left over, store for future use or take it to the City's Household Hazardous Waste disposal location.

CONVERT TO XERISCAPE

Xeriscape (zeer-a-scape) is a term that defines a creative approach to landscaping that includes the use of well-adapted plants, efficient irrigation, careful design, and proper maintenance. Xeriscape creates or replaces habitat needed by wildlife, and helps to create shade for people, our homes, and our communities. Additionally, Xeriscape does not require as much water and since the plants are native, they do not require as much chemical treatment, if any at all.



The City has developed a Grass-to-Xeriscape program to help our customers reduce their landscape water use by half or more by replacing their water-thirsty lawns with landscape plants appropriate to our Sonoran Desert climate. When you remove 500 square feet or more of established grass and replace it with a water-thrifty landscape, the City of Mesa will provide a \$500 rebate.

HELPFUL WEBSITE LINKS

Environmental & Sustainability (Stormwater, Grass-to-Xeriscape Rebate Program, Water Conservation)
<http://www.mesaaz.gov/environ/>

Grass-to-Xeriscape Landscape Rebate
<http://www.mesaaz.gov/conservation/rebate.aspx>

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events
<http://www.mesaaz.gov/waste/hhw.aspx>

Landscape Watering Reminder
<http://www.mesaaz.gov/conservation/LWR.aspx>

Natural Recipes for Home and Garden
http://www.mesaaz.gov/waste/Natural_Recipes.aspx

Stormwater
<http://www.mesaaz.gov/environ/stormwater.aspx>

SRP Residential Water Service – Flood Irrigation Systems
<http://www.srpnet.com/menu/waterres/default.aspx>

For more information call the Environmental Hotline at 480-644-3599.

