

# UF/IFAS EXTENSION SARASOTA COUNTY

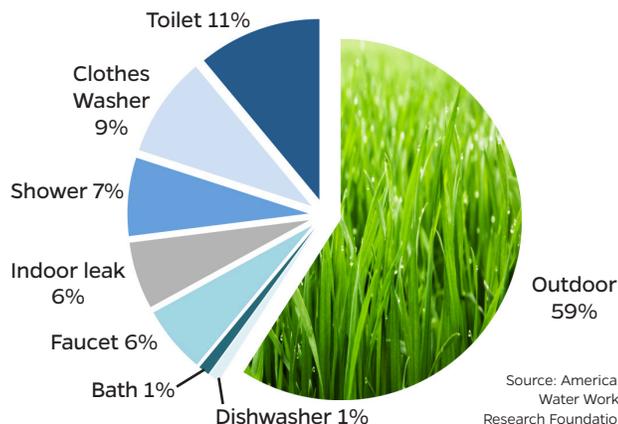
## CONSERVE WATER OUTDOORS AND SAVE MONEY

### Follow the Easy 4-Step Checklist to Get Started

Water levels in Sarasota County are tied closely to the climate, which changes drastically throughout the course of the year. Those changing conditions can put stress on resources. You can help, and foster a growing water conservation ethic, by cutting your water use outdoors.

Watering the lawn accounts for 59 percent of water use in an average single-family home, but you can keep your lawn green and still cut water use (and costs). Follow this 4-step approach to begin your year-round savings:

#### Average Water Use in Residential Areas



#### 1. Check when you water

- Set your sprinkler system clock to run at the right time and day.
- Water lawns one day per week, in the early morning hours. Watering during the day wastes water to evaporation. Late morning watering can extend natural wetting time from dew, increasing the risk of disease.



Typical irrigation system clock, with "Rain Sensor" setting.

Photo courtesy of Wilma Holley.

#### 2. Check where and how you water.

- Test your sprinkler spray patterns by watching the system run in each zone for about 5 minutes.
- Look for odd spray patterns or watering of established landscaping or paved surfaces, and then adjust or cap sprinkler heads accordingly.
  - » A common problem with sprinklers is overgrown grass or vegetation interfering with the spray pattern. Sprinkler donuts help prevent this.
  - » Established landscape beds typically thrive on normal rainfall, so cap sprinklers or use micro-irrigation in these areas.



Wet driveways and sidewalks are signs of wasted water. Heads can be adjusted to spray lawn only.



Sprinklers spraying established plants should be moved to the grass or capped.

Photos courtesy of Wilma Holley.

### 3. Check for leaks.

- Inspect for leaks by looking for bubbling and/or excessive water coming out of the ground near sprinklers.
- Scan around sprinklers for dollarweed, a water-loving plant that might indicate a leak. The presence of dollarweed is also a sign of overwatering.
- Fix leaks immediately: Leaks cost you money and waste water.



**A buried sprinkler head wastes water.**

*Photo courtesy of Wilma Holley.*



**Leak in a sprinkler due to a worn seal.**

*Photo courtesy of Ernesto Clark.*

### 4. Check your rain sensor.

- Place your rain sensor away from roof overhangs, trees, or other obstructions.
- Make sure to activate the rain sensor setting on your sprinkler system clock.
- Test your sensor by spraying it with a hose. The shut-off device will activate and turn off sprinklers. Sensor cups need to be cleaned periodically.



**Rain sensor obstructed by roof line (top) should be repositioned (bottom).**

*Photos courtesy of Wilma Holley.*

## More ways to cut outdoor water use:

1. Have one of our experts evaluate your irrigation. Call 941-861-9900 to arrange.
2. Add a rain barrel to capture water for your garden or potted plants. Call 941-861-5000.
3. Adopt Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ and become a water conservation all-star. Visit [sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/fyn.shtml](https://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/fyn.shtml)

To learn more, visit  
[sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu](https://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu) or call 941-861-5000.