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Southwest Florida Water Management District

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District Asks Homeowners to "Skip A Week" of Irrigation This Winter

Overwatering in winter can encourage pests and disease

The Southwest Florida Water Management District is reminding residents who irrigate their lawns to "Skip a Week" or more of watering during the cooler months of December, January and February.

According to research by the University of Florida, grass doesn't need to be watered as often during the cooler months. One-half to three-quarters of an inch of water every 10–14 days is sufficient. In fact, if your lawn has received any significant rainfall, then you can turn off your irrigation system and operate it manually as needed.

"Overwatering can encourage pests and disease in your lawn," said Sylvia Durell, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ project manager. "Too much irrigation can also make lawns less able to survive droughts." Skipping a week of watering is as easy as "off" for residents with irrigation timers. "Turn the timer to 'off' for the week that you want to skip, and 'on' for the week that you want to water," said Durell.

You can determine when your grass needs water when:

- Grass blades are folded in half lengthwise on at least one-third of your yard.
- Grass blades appear blue-gray.
- Grass blades do not spring back, leaving footprints on the lawn for several minutes after walking on it.

Watering only every other week at most during the winter will help conserve drinking water supplies that the public needs for critical uses during the dry season. In fact, if everyone skipped one week of irrigation this season, it could save an estimated 1.9 billion gallons of water.

Most of the region experienced a disappointing summer rainy season. In addition to entering the dry season, drier-than-normal conditions are expected to continue through next spring. All 16 counties within the District are under a Phase I water shortage alert.

For additional information about water restrictions and water conservation, please contact your local utility or visit the District's website at WaterMatters.org/SkipAWeek/.

NEWS RELEASE