

## WATER SAVING TIPS from the Regional Water Providers Consortium

Lawns certainly have their benefits, but they can also be water hogs, gulping down two to three times more water than other plants in the yard. A lot of water – between 30 and 50 percent – used to irrigate lawns is also often lost to evaporation, run-off, water from sprinklers hitting the sidewalk and street instead of the lawn, and over-watering.

The Regional Water Providers Consortium offers these tips to help you weigh alternatives for replacing all or part of your turf lawn with other plants that require less maintenance and water.

### 1. Replace lawn with alternative seed mixes

Alternative lawn seed mixes contain low-growing, drought-tolerant plant varieties that require less mowing and irrigation once established. Sometimes called “ecolawns,” these mixes combine grasses with a variety of other plants and flowers. For example, perennial ryegrass mixed with strawberry clover yarrow, English lawn daisy, Baby-blue-eyes and Roman chamomile creates a green, white, pink, and blue carpet of plant material. Micro-clover lawn is another variety. It is dark green, thick and feels good on bare feet. In the hot, dry summer months these types of alternative lawns may only need about one inch of water per month, compared to the one inch of water needed weekly by turf grass lawns. You can mow the alternative lawn about once a month to maintain a height of about three to six inches.

### 2. Plant groundcovers

Groundcovers come in a variety of textures and colors – some even have flowers and berries. Groundcover varieties, such as Woolly Thyme, are often called “Stepables.” These are great for planting in parking strips, between stepping stones and on paths. They feel good to walk on and don’t need to be mowed.

### 3. Choose shrubs and trees

Many homeowners are taking out their parking strip lawns and planting shrubs and trees, which add structure and definition to a landscape and invite birds into your yard. Once established, they generally require much less water than a lawn, and once established, don’t need much, if any, supplemental watering.

Get information about making good use of water in your landscape the Regional Water Providers Consortium’s website, [www.conserveh2o.org](http://www.conserveh2o.org). You can also learn more about alternatives to turf and view a slide show of water-efficient plants.