

**It's true:**

***Automatic sprinkler systems waste at least one-third of the water they use.***

Many people install automatic systems to make watering less of a chore. But the water bills can be a surprise! Check out these alternatives and have a beautiful and healthy yard, while wasting less water and spending less money.

✦ **The smart alternative - a sustainable landscape without automatic irrigation.**

You can develop a beautiful landscape that will thrive with fewer resources- including much less water – by following these basic steps:

- Assess your yard's soil, sun/shade and drainage conditions so you make choices that will work. See the [Choosing the Right Plants Guide](#).
- Choose plants that will thrive in your yard's conditions (especially those that will need little or no supplemental water after they are established). See [The Plant List](#).
- Plant in the fall so nature waters for you and gets those roots established during cooler weather.
- Cultivate the soil well, tilling in compost (do not add compost to individual planting holes when you are only planting an individual plant, as the roots may not venture beyond the planting hole). See the [Growing Healthy Soil Guide](#).
- Mulch the soil surface after planting to reduce water needs and weeds. See the [Growing Healthy Soil Guide](#).
- Next spring use soaker hoses to water the plants, watering deeply and less often to develop healthy roots. See the [Smart Watering Guide](#) and [Soaker Hose fact sheet](#).
- After plants are established – usually one to three years – you'll only need to provide an occasional deep watering.
- If you hire a professional garden designer, ask about his/her philosophy on how to create an earth-friendly yard when you interview.
- To include a lawn area in your yard that will look better with less water, follow the basic steps in the [Natural Lawn Care Guide](#).

✦ **If you still want an automatic sprinkler, [do it right](#) and waste less.**

✦ **If you already have an automatic sprinkler system, [take steps](#) to waste less!**



**For more details on ....a better way to beautiful:**

- Read the Saving Water Partnership's ***Natural Lawn & Garden Guides***. Click on these links to download a pdf, or contact the Hotline, below.
  - ◆ [Natural Yard Care](#) (summary)
  - ◆ [Smart Watering](#)
  - ◆ [Growing Healthy Soil](#)
  - ◆ [Composting at Home](#)
  - ◆ [Choosing the Right Plants](#)
  - ◆ [Natural Pest, Weed & Disease Control](#)
  - ◆ [The Plant List](#)
  - ◆ [Natural Lawn Care](#)
  - ◆ [Soaker Hose Fact Sheet](#)
- Contact the *Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline* for free copies of the guides and for all your horticultural questions: 206.633.0224, or <mailto:info@lawnandgardenhotline.org>.
- View the *Savvy Gardener newsletter* on line at:
  - ◆ [www.savingwater.org/savvygardener/](http://www.savingwater.org/savvygardener/) and subscribe at:
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