

Permanent Water Saving Rules Fact Sheet – Gardens and Lawns

Watering gardens and lawns

Under Permanent Water Saving Rules, private and public gardens and lawns can be watered using the following methods:

- a hand-held hose fitted with a trigger nozzle can be used at any time;
- a manual watering system (that you turn on or off by hand) can only be used between 8pm - 10am, on any day of the week; and
- an automatic watering system (that is set to turn on and off automatically) can only be used between 10pm - 10am, on any day of the week.

All automatic watering systems installed from **1 September 2005**, must be fitted with a rain or soil moisture sensor. For public gardens and recreational areas only, a rain or soil moisture sensor (or an equivalent device) must be fitted to all existing automatic watering systems by **1 September 2006**.

Rain and soil moisture sensors

Rain and soil moisture sensors are devices that are designed to be fitted to automatic watering systems to prevent them from operating when it is raining (in the case of a rain sensor) or when the soil is wet (in the case of a soil moisture sensor).

Rain sensors

A rain sensor collects rainfall and overrides the time-based controller of an automatic watering system once the specified volume of water has been detected.

Rain sensors are small, technically simple devices with little maintenance required. They are generally cheaper to buy than soil moisture sensors and can usually be installed by the home handy person.

Soil moisture sensors

Soil moisture sensors detect the amount of moisture contained in soil. Once the specified level of moisture is reached, they prevent the automatic watering system from operating.

Soil moisture sensors are more technically sophisticated than rain sensors and require some skill to install to ensure they operate effectively. As a result, they are usually more expensive than rain sensors. However, as they detect water directly within the root zone of plants their potential for saving water is much higher than rain sensors.

General Exemptions

New gardens and lawns

Watering systems (automatic and manual) may be used outside the prescribed watering times to water all new lawns (turf, hydromulch and seed) and garden beds as required to suit the prevailing weather conditions, for up to the first 28 days after installation.

Existing gardens and lawns

Watering systems (automatic and manual) may be used outside the prescribed watering times to:

- water gardens and lawns during and/or immediately after the application of fertilisers, when this is the only practical time available to undertake this activity, or is recommended by the manufacturer; or
- to test irrigation systems for leaks and/or correct operation.