



5620 Birdcage Street, Suite 180
Citrus Heights, CA 95610



www.BeWaterSmart.info

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Amy Talbot
Water Efficiency Program Manager
Regional Water Authority
(916) 967-7692
atalbot@rwah2o.org

Check Soil Moisture Before Turning on Sprinklers, Water Providers Urge

*Free Moisture Meters Available at BeWaterSmart.info**

SACRAMENTO— Sacramento-area water providers are encouraging residents to check soil moisture before turning on sprinklers and are offering free moisture meters to help.

The call to action comes on the heels of an unusually wet winter and spring. However, the campaign isn't just about using water efficiently, which is important no matter the weather, said Amy Talbot, Water Efficiency Program Manager for the Regional Water Authority (RWA), which represents two dozen water providers and affiliates in the Sacramento region. "Checking soil moisture is very much about nurturing healthy plants," Talbot said.

Looks can be deceiving when it comes to knowing when to water your landscape, and in the Sacramento region, where most household water goes toward watering landscapes, it's estimated that about 30 percent of that is lost to overwatering and evaporation.

"Research shows that people often decide to water their landscapes just by looking at their plants or if the weather is hot and dry," Talbot said. "Checking soil moisture with a meter or by digging down into the soil can help you more accurately deliver the amount of water your plants need to be healthy—without the waste."

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**While supplies last. Moisture meters limited to customers located within the Be Water Smart participant area. Information about participating agencies is available at BeWaterSmart.info.*

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Here are some ways to check the soil moisture:

- **Use a moisture meter.** This is the most efficient way to tell if you need to water your yard. Moisture meters feature an easy-to-read dial that indicates if the soil is dry, moist or wet. Simply push the moisture meter into the soil six to eight inches deep and check the reading.

Make sure to check a few different spots in your yard and your potted plants as well; and then water accordingly, following your water provider's schedule.

- **Do the screwdriver test.** Stick an eight-inch screwdriver into the soil. If you can push it in more than three inches below the surface, you don't need to water.
- **Dig down six to eight inches** with a small shovel or trowel and grab a handful of soil. Roll the soil around in the palm of your hand. If the soil easily forms a ball in your hand, you don't need to water.

A limited number of free moisture meters are [available by request](#) on BeWaterSmart.info, while supplies last,* as well as helpful videos on efficient watering, including:

- [“How to Water Your Yard Without Wasting a Drop”](#) using the Cycle & Soak method of watering
- [“How to Have a Healthy Lawn with 30% Less Water”](#) by upgrading to efficient rotators sprinklers
- [“How to Get Your Trees Ready for Summer”](#) and [“How to Help Mature Trees Survive the Hot Summer Months”](#) in partnership with the Sacramento Tree Foundation

About the Regional Water Authority: RWA is a joint powers authority representing two dozen water providers and affiliates in the greater Sacramento area. Its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources.

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