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NEWS RELEASE

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Check Soil Moisture Before Watering Your Yard, Water Providers Urge

*Free Moisture Meters Available at BeWaterSmart.info**

SACRAMENTO--Looks can be deceiving when it comes to knowing when to water your landscape. That's the message local water providers want people to know as they start to ramp up their sprinkler systems with the hotter weather.

"Research tells us that people often decide to water their landscapes just by looking at their plants or if the weather is hot and dry," said Amy Talbot, Water Efficiency Program Manager for the Regional Water Authority (RWA), which represents 20 water providers serving 2 million people in the Sacramento region. "The result is that oftentimes people overwater their landscapes, applying more water than their lawn and plants really need."

"This year in particular, as California endures a second dry year in a row, it's important that people use water efficiently, especially outdoors where most household water use occurs," Talbot added.

In the Sacramento region, most household water use goes toward watering landscapes, and it's estimated that about 30 percent of that is lost to overwatering and evaporation.

"Instead of guessing if their landscape needs water by looks and weather alone, we're asking

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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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people to check with a moisture meter, screwdriver or hand shovel first, before turning on sprinklers,” Talbot said.

Here are some ways to check the soil moisture:

- **Use a moisture meter.** This is the most effective 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.



*RWA is offering a limited number of free moisture meters at BeWaterSmart.info, while supplies last.**

- **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.

“Checking soil moisture before you water will not only help you use water wisely, it will also keep your plants healthier,” Talbot said. “They’ll get the right amount of water they need, and you’ll make sure every drop counts.”

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) is a joint powers authority representing 20 water providers serving 2 million people in the greater Sacramento region. Formed in 2001, its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources. Learn more at BeWaterSmart.info and rwah2o.org.

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