

August 19, 2009

Keeping Water Front of Mind – Water Conservation Education Team Shares Advice

The City's Water Conservation Education Team is keeping active this summer informing residents about Campbell River's water supply and advising people about the best ways to use our water.

The friendly "water cops" also monitor whether people are following sprinkling restrictions and provide education packages where necessary.

The good news so far is that many homes are letting their grass go dormant in the summer. Many other homes are watering correctly. The not so good news is that some addresses, although watering at the correct times and dates, are still over-watering lawns as well as driveways, sidewalks and streets.

"We're pleased the team is out and about on behalf of the City ensuring people are using water responsibly," says Mayor Charlie Cornfield. "Responsible water use is in everyone's best interest, and we urge residents to make sure we this resource efficiently."

The team's recommendation for a green lawn: one inch (2.5 centimetres) of water per week in up to two applications. Deep watering encourages deep root growth, for a hardy lawn. Soil usually can't absorb more than one inch of water, and excess water becomes wasted run-off.

"In some cases, the one-inch-per-week recommendation has been greeted with skepticism, and this is understandable because to get there from here requires a change in how we approach lawn care," the Mayor says. "We encourage everyone to adopt a 'greener' approach to watering in our community."

For one inch of water per week to sustain lawns, cut grass to three inches (7.5 centimetres) tall. Lawns should also be well mulched, aerated and grown in a soil base able to retain the water. Residents willing to experiment with cutting back on lawn watering should start slowly, allowing plants to adapt to the change and develop deep roots, members of the Water Team advise, adding that rainfall counts toward the weekly goal of one inch of water on the lawn.

To learn how much water a sprinkler system delivers, residents can conduct the "can test." Set out five to 10 cans (three to seven inches – 7.5 to 17.5 centimetres in diameter) when watering the lawn. For in-ground systems, place cans in a scatter pattern in one zone (do each zone separately as they may differ). For hose-end sprinklers, space cans evenly in a straight line from the sprinkler to the end of the watering arc. Run the sprinkler for 15 minutes then carefully measure the depth of water in each can. Next find the average depth for all the cans.

If after 15 minutes, average depth in cans is:

	3mm (1/8")	6mm (1/4")	12mm (1/2")	20mm (3/4")	25mm (1")
Water					
Once a week	120 minutes	60 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes
Twice a week	60 minutes	30 minutes	15 minutes	10 minutes	8 minutes

(Source: www.crd.bc.ca/water)

Members of the Water Team are available to conduct a can test for local residents. To arrange a can test, e-mail water.wise@campbellriver.ca.

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