

Water Conservation

In-ground Irrigation System . . . Friend or Foe

There are currently more than 600 in-ground irrigation systems installed at single family residential properties throughout Concord. The average home in town with an in-ground irrigation system uses 2.5 times more water than a home without one, which translates to a water bill of \$250 for a home with irrigation as opposed to a bill of only \$75 for a home without.

Sustainable design

Think about how you use your yard:

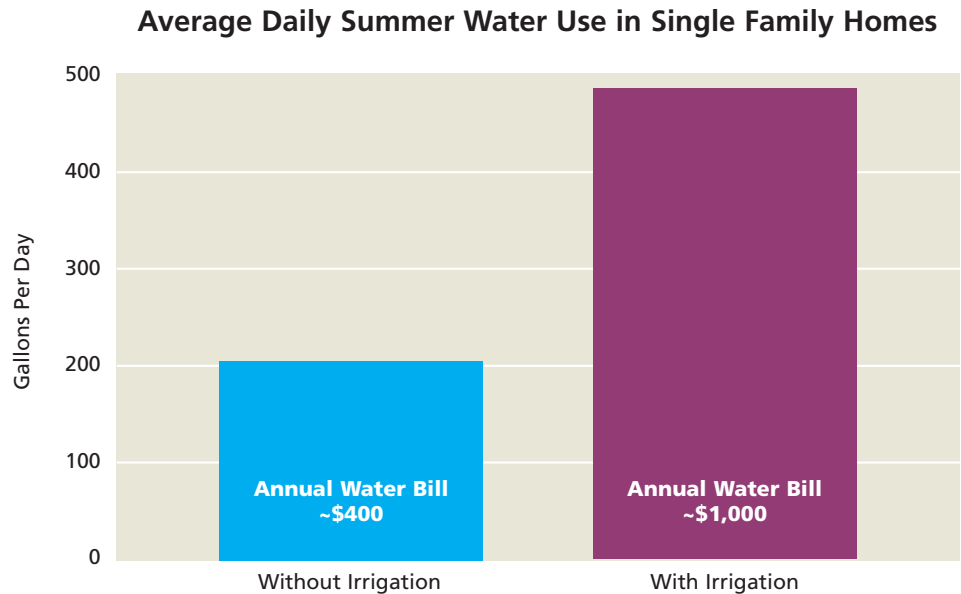
- Do you have a large area of grass in front of your home that is rarely used for active play?
- Do you have an area of lawn that you are struggling to grow grass in?
- Do you want to spend less time maintaining your lawn?

Timing is everything

Give your investment the best chance to succeed by planting grass, gardens, and/or landscaping in the spring or the fall—before or after the hot, dry summer weather. The natural weather patterns associated with spring and fall supplemented by infrequent soaking watering will help to establish a strong, deep root system that is able to withstand the natural variations in precipitation during the summer months. Avoid installing any new plantings from June through August when plants that aren't yet established have difficulty surviving the dry, hot summer weather.

Asset or liability

Most homeowners view their in-ground irrigation system as an investment or as a modern convenience, but public water suppliers like Concord Public Works' (CPW) Water Division instead view these systems as a liability. The convenience factor of an in-ground irrigation system often leads to over-watering,



which is detrimental to both your plantings and the public water supply. By intentionally watering plantings by hand or physically turning on the hose, you have an active role in keeping your investment and the environment healthy. Your irrigation system won't know that your lawn doesn't actually need watering this morning because it is forecast to rain tonight; luckily, you will know this, and if you are actively in control of when your lawn is being watered, you can avoid watering when it is not necessary.

The challenges ahead

Concord's Water Division is actively working with Massachusetts regulators on the details of our new water withdrawal permits. Our updated permit will likely contain more limitations on the amount of water that we can provide to you, our customers. We encourage you to plan your investments accordingly, keeping in mind that there will likely be increased water use restrictions in the future, especially in regards to the use of in-ground irrigation.

We can help

There are many ways that you can utilize water-efficient landscaping to enhance the beauty of your property that does not involve the use of in-ground irrigation. Email us at watersmart@concordma.gov if you are interested in additional information or to schedule a free at-home conservation consultation.

Do you have water or seepage in your basement?

You may benefit from installing a rain barrel or redirecting your downspout(s) to a rain garden. A rain garden looks just like a regular flower bed and can be located where grass doesn't like to grow.