



Rain gauges are devices designed to measure how much rain was received at a specific location over a designated period of time. Rain gauges are easy to use and can act as an accurate way to measure how much water plants are getting over time. Use your rain gauge to monitor how much rain was received at your house. Keep track of weekly rainfall totals to determine whether your lawn needs additional water.

How to Use a Rain Gauge

Step 1 - Clean your rain gauge to begin use. Allow it to dry thoroughly before using it.

Step 2 - Place your rain gauge straight up and down at the location where you want to measure the rain. Place the rain gauge outside free and clear of any buildings and trees or plants. Make sure your rain gauge is secure so it won't tip over.

Step 3 - Determine the period of time that you want to measure the rainfall. Some people pour the rain out of their rain gauges at the same time each week to get an idea of the total rainfall for a week. Others check their rain gauges after each rainfall.

Step 4 - Wait for the rain to be completely over before checking the level of rain to get the full rain reading. Rain gauges measure rain in tenths of inches.

Step 5 - Write down in a notebook the amount of rain in your rain gauge in order to track the amount of rain you receive.

Step 6 - Empty your rain gauge, and return it to its location so it's ready to collect the next round of rain.



Don't Forget!

- Use your rain gauge to measure rainfall and see how much water your lawn needs, if any!
- For more information on water conservation, please contact your local water utility or visit www.lakecountyil.gov/savewater.

This brochure was originally produced by the DuPage County Water Commission and slightly modified for distribution in Lake County.

Did You Know?

For an average non-conserving home, 80-90% of outdoor water use goes toward landscape irrigation. Efficient water use can cut down on water waste and still provide water for plants and turf. Outdoor water efficiency is especially important during the hot summer months when as much as 50% of home water use is for watering lawns and gardens.

- A typical Illinois lawn needs about 1-1½ inches of water each week, including rain according to www.gardenillinois.com.
- In Illinois, cool season grasses can go dormant during hot, dry weather without watering and recover when growing conditions improve in the late summer or early autumn.
- Overwatering causes runoff, wastes water, and carries fertilizers and other chemicals into storm sewers that empty directly into Lake County's streams and lakes.



LAWNCARE Water Use





Preserving Water

While Caring for your Lawn

If we considered watering the average-sized lawn of 1/5 of an acre with the recommended amount of water of 1" per week, that lawn would require about 65,000 gallons of water for the 3 months of summer. Here are some ideas that might help cut down on your family's water use but still maintain a healthy lawn.

- **Water only what grows.** Make sure the heads are adjusted properly to avoid watering sidewalks and driveways. A properly adjusted sprinkler head should spray large droplets of water, not a fine mist, to minimize evaporation and wind drift.
- **Let your lawn go dormant** during the hottest months by not watering. Cool-season grasses stop growing at temperatures above 90° F. It will grow back in the cooler months of fall.

Share Your Sustainability Story

Join the "Kid Patrol" in stopping fertilizer pollution! You can watch this video and other videos on sustainable practices at www.lakecountyiil.gov/savewater. Tell us how you are conserving water and we may feature your story on our website and TV! Email us at communications@lakecountyiil.gov or call 847.377-2550.

Efficient Watering



Timing



- **Monitor rainfall.** Don't water the lawn if rains are expected soon. Keep track of rainfall with your rain gauge. Don't apply more water than what is necessary.
- **Water early in the day** when lawns are normally wet from dew. Avoid midday watering due to evaporation, and at night due to potential increased chances of some diseases.

Frequency



- **Water every 5-7 days (if no rain).** A soaking rain can extend the period to 10-14 days.
- **Water as infrequently as possible.** Water thoroughly so moisture gets down to the depth of the roots. Avoid frequent waterings that promote shallower root systems and weeds.



Amount

- **Depends on your lawn.** Cool-season grasses need about 1-1 1/2 inches of water per week.
- **Avoid overwatering.** Overwatering does more than deplete the water supply; it also makes plants prone to pests and adds to stormwater runoff, which can pollute our waterways.
- **Consider drip irrigation.** When it comes to watering individual trees, flowerbeds, potted containers or other non-grassy areas, you can apply water directly to the roots with low volume drip irrigation. This will reduce water waste through evaporation or runoff and keep weeds from growing.

Efficient Mowing

- **Mow at the highest setting.** For most cool-season lawns, a height of between 3" to 3 1/2" is considered adequate. Keeping the grass slightly higher will increase shade on the soil, encourage deeper rooting and reduce evaporation.

Efficient Fertilizing

- **Fertilize once a year** in October after the rainy season to allow fertilizer to be absorbed by the roots. Always use a slow release, phosphorous free fertilizer. Excess fertilizer applications increase water consumption.



Planning for Our Future Water Supply

The Lake County Water Supply Advisory Committee, which includes elected leaders and other stakeholders, is working to establish sustainable policies and practices in order to ensure there is available, clean, safe, and cost-effective drinking water in the future. You can read reports, view meeting schedules and more at www.lakecountyiil.gov. For more information, call 847-377-2550.