



Michael B. Coleman,
Mayor

Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

By implementing some smart changes in your lawn maintenance and gardening practices, you can improve the health and appearance of your yard, saving time and money while doing something good for the environment. To make good use of every drop of water:

Reduce Water Consumption

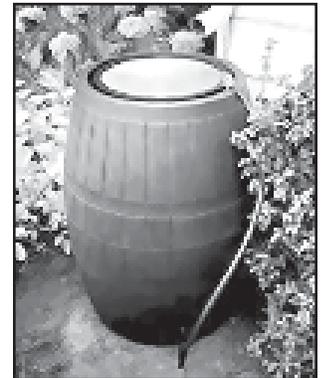
- Did you know that just one inch of water per week is enough to keep most lawns healthy? For a free rain gauge to track weekly rainfall amounts, please call 311 (or 645-3111) or 645-8270.
- A layer of mulch or Com-Til compost around plants helps retain soil moisture. Adding compost also improves soil quality. For information on how to purchase Com-Til compost, please call 645-3153 or visit www.utilities.columbus.gov, where you will also find links to information on how to make your own compost from yard waste and kitchen scraps.
- If you are still planting annuals, consider making the change to perennials, preferably those native to Ohio. Native plants are acclimated to our soil and climate conditions and once established, can typically thrive on rainfall alone.
- Use a soaker hose in the garden for deep, infrequent watering.
- Water in the morning or evening to reduce evaporation that occurs when done at the hottest part of the day.



- If your home has a sprinkler system, turn it on manually only when needed rather than using the timer which might turn on during rain. There are also automatic shut-off devices available.
- Choose the right plant for the site; consider the amount of sunlight, soil type and pH your plants require.

Reuse Rain Water

- Place a rain barrel under a downspout to collect rain water for future use. The barrels are available at various garden supply retailers and through a city-sponsored partnership with the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed. For more information, please call 267-3386 or visit www.olentangywatershed.org.
- Plant a rain garden to help eliminate areas in your yard that collect rain. For more information, visit www.centralohioraingardens.org.



For ideas on ways to conserve water inside your home, please visit our website, www.utilities.columbus.gov.



Special Conservation Program for Columbia Gas Customers

All Columbia Gas of Ohio customers who have hot water tanks heated by natural gas are eligible for a Simple Energy Solutions program that offers a \$10 rebate on the purchase of energy-efficient showerheads. Upgrading to water-saving fixtures saves money on the heating of the water and the amount of water used.

For details, please call 1-866-542-4767 or visit www.columbiagasohio.com.

OARS Deep Sewer Tunnel Construction Planned to Begin This Fall

A crucial requirement of the consent order between the City of Columbus and the State of Ohio is to reduce the environmental impacts caused by Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). The OSIS (Oientangy Scioto Interceptor Sewer) Augmentation Relief Sewer, known as OARS, is the key component in meeting this goal. This sewer tunnel will intercept wet weather overflows that currently empty into the Scioto River and carry the flows instead to the city's Jackson Pike and Southerly wastewater treatment plants.

The construction, expected to begin in September, will involve digging a 20-foot diameter tunnel with a total length of about 23,300 feet. The tunnel will provide relief to the existing OSIS trunk sewer from just north of the Arena District to the Jackson Pike facility.

The overall length of the OARS tunnel is just under four and a half miles, and will include three relief structures that will divert wet weather combined sewer flow from the OSIS to the OARS tunnel. The OARS project will control all of the regulators (relief structures where the sewers currently overflow to the river multiple times per year) in the downtown riverfront area to a level in which they might overflow once every ten years on average.

The tunnel will be approximately 170 feet below ground, reducing risks associated with construction at more shallow levels. This will require special drop structures (or vertical shafts) to direct flow from existing shallow

sewers to the new deep tunnel. In addition, the drop structures will dissipate energy and minimize air entry into the tunnel. The tunnel shafts are designed to handle hydraulic surges which will prevent impacts on upstream sewers. A screening system will be installed upstream of the Jackson Pike facility. A pump station will empty the tunnel directly to the treatment plants after significant rain events thereby utilizing as much treatment capacity as possible.

Estimated construction cost for Phase 1 of the project is approximately \$230 million; Phase 2 is \$65 million. Phase 2 construction is expected to begin in 2011 and both phases will be operational by the end of 2014.

To finance the construction costs of Phase 1, the City of Columbus has requested \$230 million from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF). The standard WPCLF interest rate is currently 3.25% for a 20-year construction loan. Financing this project through the Ohio EPA's below-market interest rate loan program will save millions of dollars in interest payment over the life of the loan, compared to financing through higher interest rate bonds. The savings will be passed on to the city's sewer utility rate payers, thereby minimizing the slight increase expected in sewer rates over the next several years due to the cost of this project.

For more information, please visit utilities.columbus.gov or contact George Zonders at 645-2926.

