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# Earth Action: Save Water on Lawns



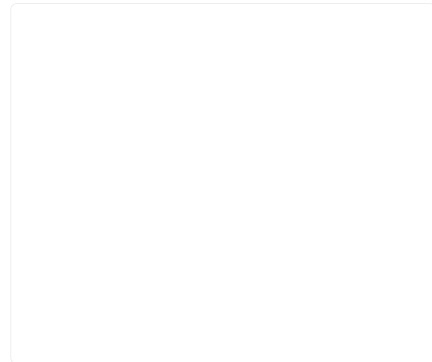
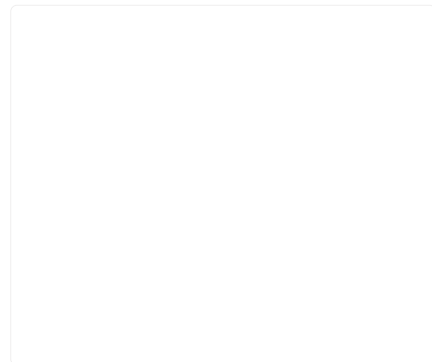
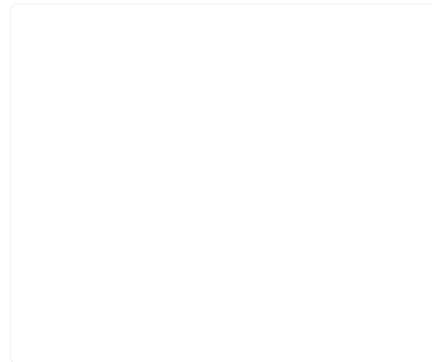
By [Gemma Alexander](#)

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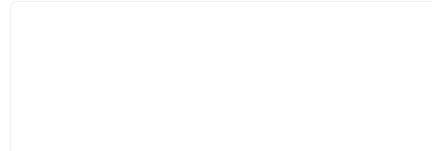


In honor of Earth Day's 52 years of inspiring environmental action, Earth911 is offering 52 Actions for the Earth. Each week until Earth Day 2023, we will share one action you can take to **invest in the Earth** and make your own life more sustainable.

Maintaining a traditional American lawn all summer can have a significant environmental impact. The chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers we dump on our lawns to make them grow – as well as the **gas-powered** yard equipment we use to keep grass short – take an environmental toll. Lawns use a lot of water, too – **between 30% and 60%** of a house CLOSE's water is



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used outdoors. This week, you can invest in the earth by using less water on your lawn.

## Action: Be Green by Letting Your Lawn Go Gold

### Greener Options

The most sustainable thing you could do with your grass lawn is get rid of it. Replacing grass with nitrogen-fixing [clover](#) or other [grass alternatives](#) will reduce the inputs required to keep your yard looking nice, and will free up the time you used to spend [mowing](#). But lots of Americans love their grass lawns.

If you can't bear to part with grass, there are a lot of ways to make your lawn more environmentally friendly. We waste a lot of resources thanks to lawn care [myths](#).

### Going Gold

But of [all the resources](#) we waste maintaining lawns, the one that's most relevant during the hottest part of summer is water. Water demand peaks in the summer, during the same time that the Western United States experiences [dry weather](#). During times of [drought](#), which are an increasingly common [consequence of climate change](#), some states and municipalities may [ban the watering](#) of lawns or even require their [removal](#). As these sorts of regulations become more common, people are becoming more accepting of the sight of a yellow lawn. In places where rainfall is seasonal, let a lawn [go gold](#) in the dry season. Although the lawn may appear to be dead, it will naturally turn green again when the rain returns.

### Wise Watering

Although some communities are banning lawns, there are others that require homeowners to maintain a green lawn year-round. And for many homeowners, summer is the time they enjoy their lawn the most. If you can't give up watering your lawn in the summer, you can still find ways to save water. In that case, you can still take action this week.

## Action: Water Wisely

### Weekly Water

Daily watering is wasteful and is not healthy for your lawn. It encourages top growth at the expense of root growth. Weak, shallow root systems leave grass vulnerable to stress. Water deeply once or twice a week to enable plants to [develop strong](#)

root systems that extract water from the soil more efficiently. Established lawns only need to be watered when the plants start to wilt.

## More Efficient Water Tips

To minimize evaporation, don't water during the hottest part of the day. Leave the cuttings on the lawn when you mow to act as a mulch in addition to [other benefits](#). If you have an automatic watering system, inspect it regularly; install a rain shutoff device; and either adjust the schedule monthly or install a [WaterSense labeled controller](#) that adjusts your run times according to the weather.

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By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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