

episode two: How to Water Wisely

In this episode Billy is stunned by an outrageous water bill, faints and reawakens in a mountain temple occupied by the wise man (Owen) who teaches him how to use less water. At a client's house they focus on irrigation systems and scheduling to water more efficiently, saving time, money and resources. They show how to maintain systems and change them as the plants grow. Billy gives a few tips on basic hardware involved in irrigation systems, while Owen shows how to create an irrigation schedule. This episode is full of practical information that will cut your water usage in no time and save you money, too.

key concepts

- 1. Use water conserving plants** and group them in with other plants of similar irrigation needs—your big word for the day is "hydrozones"!
- 2. Lawns aren't evil!** Just limit the size to enough for your recreational needs. Otherwise, find a more water conserving planting.
- 3. Mulch!** To reduce evaporation and increase organic matter. Irrigate efficiently.
- 4. Water early** in the morning or late in evening when evaporation rates are low.
- 5. Use a soil probe** to check moisture at the plant's root zone (free through your water agency). Just 'cause the surface looks dry, doesn't mean there isn't plenty of water below.
- 6. Maintain irrigation systems.** Adjust the schedule according to weather and seasons. Sprinklers on during a downpour? Get into action and turn them off!



Variables That Affect Your Irrigation Schedule

1. Plant type (high or low water use?)
2. Soil texture (water moves quickly through sandier soil)
3. Sun/Shade (water evaporates less in the shade, so water accordingly.)
4. Slope (watch for run off, water slowly for absorption.)
5. Sprinkler (drip vs. overhead)



Cathie's Irrigation Tip

Use catch cans (or flat bottom cans) to determine how much you are watering your lawns.

Follow these five steps:

1. Scatter 5 cans around the lawn and near the edges.
2. Run the sprinklers for 15 minutes.
3. Measure water in inches.
4. Find the average depth.
5. Consult a lawn watering guide to refine watering time in minutes. See the [landscape watering calculator](#).

