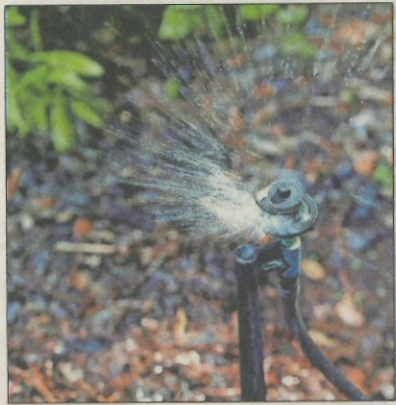


Bringing Earth Day home



PROVIDED/BARBARA SMITH

Calibrate your sprinklers to prevent overwatering of the lawn.

Smart irrigation saves water

BY GUINN WALLOVER
Special to The Post and Courier

The average American family uses more than 30 percent of its water on irrigation. Across the United States, that means 7 billion gallons of water are used per day to water our lawns and gardens. Unfortunately, poor irrigation practices mean that more than 50 percent of that water is lost to runoff and evaporation.

Here in the Lowcountry, although water is seemingly abundant, smart irrigation is an important conservation practice that reduces the impact irrigation-related runoff has on waterways. Additionally, good irrigation helps lawns thrive and protects against plant disease. In the quest to have the best-looking yard on the block, the following irrigation tips will keep your lawn healthy and protect the water resources we love.

Have your soil tested

Visit your local Clemson Extension office and have your soil tested. A soil test will provide recommendations for lime or fertilizer that may be needed to create a thriving lawn that can withstand our tough summers. And, if you are only applying what your lawn needs, you will be reducing the amount of excess fertilizers picked up with runoff and carried downstream.

Adjust mower height

Using the right mower height for your grass promotes a denser root system, helping to out-compete weeds and making your lawn drought tolerant. Mowing height varies between grass species, ranging from 1 to 4 inches, so you'll need to adjust your mower accordingly, making sure to only remove 1/3 of the grass height each time you mow. The Clemson Home and Garden Information Center factsheet, "Mowing Lawns," offers specific information for your grass type: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/mowing-lawns/>.

Know when to water

Overwatering lawns makes grass

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID QUICK/STAFF

Michael Whitfield of Green Roof Outfitters says green roofs retain and detain rainfall during storms and could help ease flooding issues in Charleston.

Property owners can do more to managing natural resources

BY DAVID QUICK
dquick@postandcourier.com

As the population of the Charleston area continues to swell, protecting its natural resources will increasingly fall on the shoulders of individuals.

That's especially the case when it comes to water.

In the Charleston area, managing water — from easing, flooding, both from storms and pollution — has emerged as a top community issue for most municipalities.

In the past, people have relied on the government to make expensive infrastructure improvements, but individual property owners can do a lot to help out, as well.

Joshua Robinson, engineer and owner of Robinson Design Engineers, thinks solutions can be homegrown, too.

"Go to any city council meetings and the flooding and drainage problems only seem solvable by some large, multimillion dollar system. There's not a lot of discussion what individuals can do," says Robinson.

Robinson's firm specializes in finding more natural, less expensive solutions for water management.

Local projects have been the eco-friendly subdivision Fox Hollow on James Island and the Tupelo Bend office park on Maybank Highway on Johns Island.

Currently, Robinson Design is working on

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Some of the varieties planted at a rain garden workshop two years ago at the Mount Pleasant Fire Station off Egypt Road were heliotrope, aster, coreopsis, rudbeckia, Shenandoah switchgrass, sweetgrass and dwarf bottlebrush.



The spouts from a green roof (left) and one without (right) on buildings demonstrate the difference in stormwater runoff.

Want a rain barrel?

WHAT: Ashley Cooper Stormwater Education Consortium 2018 Rain Barrel Sale.

HOW MUCH: \$68

(retail value \$129).

DEADLINE TO ORDER:

11 p.m. May 27.

PICKUP TIMES/LOCATIONS:

4-6 p.m. June 1 at Gahagan Park, Summerville. 9-11:30 a.m. June 2

at Lonnie Hamilton Public Services

Building, North Charleston.

WEBSITE: <https://www.rainwater>

[solutions.com/products/acsec-ivy](https://www.rainwater)

Daniel Island home tour to feature 8 houses on April 28

BY DAVID QUICK
dquick@postandcourier.com

House tours in Charleston this spring have featured historic homes

Magazine Publisher Tim Barkley says a unique feature of the tour will be the ability for tour attendees to speak directly with the builders of the homes.

premium kitchen equipment and sharing cooking samples.

Attendees must stop by The Taylor Agency, 225 Seven Farms Drive, Suite 102, during tour hours.

...the cistern goes to the rain garden.
 ...Agent Kim Counts Morganello has played a key role in developing the rain gardening

...program and last year pitched the idea of a Master Rain Gardener program, much like the

...cisterns and the installation of rain gardens.
 The program features online instruction and a hands-on workshop to be held at

...well," says Morganello.
 Contact **David Quick** at 843-937-5516. Follow him on Twitter @DavidQuick.

The luxe outside



CASTELLE/WWW.CASTELLELUXURY.COM VIA AP

Outdoor Collection for Castelle is
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Vondom collaborates with international designers and architects on high-concept resin decor with an edge. That includes Ramon Esteve's geometric Vela collection, which uses LED lighting in the bases, so seating and tables seem to float slightly at night, to ethereal effect. Planes and angles create sculptural pieces of art that are also a sunchair, bench and planter.

Tropitone's Cabana Club collection blends woven, metal and upholstery elements in roomy, contemporary seating inspired by luxe resorts in Bali and the Cote d'Azur.

CB2's new outdoor collection includes Ceci Thompson's French Riviera-inspired mahogany and cabana-striped sofa. A daybed poises slim cushions on an iron frame given a rich golden glaze.

European midcentury modern looks are also finding their way outdoors. For Gloster, Petersen's chic, minimalist Blow side table perches a sliver of teak on a smoke, coffee or emerald-hued ceramic base.

Many designers' patterns dispel the notion that outdoor furniture should be printed with tropical motifs.

Setting up sprinklers properly can help conserve water

WATER, from D1

more susceptible to disease, encourages weed growth, and results in runoff into nearby storm drains. And, let's not forget the impact of high water bills on our wallets.

Use a rain gauge to monitor rainfall or take an evening stroll across the lawn and check to see if you leave "footprints," a sign that lawns may need supplemental irrigation.

Water deeply, not daily

Unless you are establishing a new lawn, don't water daily. Water deeply but infrequently to promote a deep root zone that can better access soil moisture. In summer months, lawns need approximately 1 inch of rainfall per week or you will need to irrigate.

To irrigate, apply 0.5 inch of water twice a week for lawns in sandy soils; apply 1 inch of water once a week for lawns in clayey soils. If you can easily press the tip of a screwdriver several inches into the soil, you'll know it is well-watered.

Set your alarm early and plan to turn on your sprinkler before 10 a.m. in the morning to reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation.

Water testing

As water comes in contact with minerals in the soil, organic matter, and microbes, the amount of salt and nutrients present will vary. Too many or too few of any of these in your irrigation water can prove harmful to the lawn. If your irrigation sys-

tem is tied into a pond or a well, have an irrigation water test performed. Bring a pint-size sample of your water to your local Extension office and ask for the "Special Test." This test provides information on any water quality concerns and your Extension agents can provide next steps to help protect your lawn investment.

Calibrate your sprinkler

Calibrate your sprinklers to ensure you aren't over, or under, watering your lawn. Place empty food cans at random locations around your sprinkler heads in your yard. Calculate the average water collected (in inches) after running your sprinkler for 15 minutes.

Multiply that number by four to find out how many inches of water are being applied per hour via your irrigation system.

If establishing a new landscape, consider more drought-tolerant options.

Zoysiagrass and bermudagrass are the most drought-tolerant turf grasses for our coastal communities. Alternatively, abandon turf grass all together and create a flowering meadow, perennial shade garden, or backyard greenscape with native plants that are well-adapted to our soils and climate. Once established, these landscapes have lower irrigation and fertility needs.

Visit the Home and Garden Information Center at <https://hgic.clemson.edu> or call your local county Extension office for more information on these and other practices.

Guinn Wallover is a Natural Resources Extension agent for the Clemson Extension Service.

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