



TOWN
OF
SHELTER ISLAND

HOMEOWNER GUIDE TO IRRIGATION

HOW TO:
CARE FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE
COMPLY WITH THE TOWN CODE
PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES



This brochure was produced by
the Town of Shelter Island Water Advisory Committee.

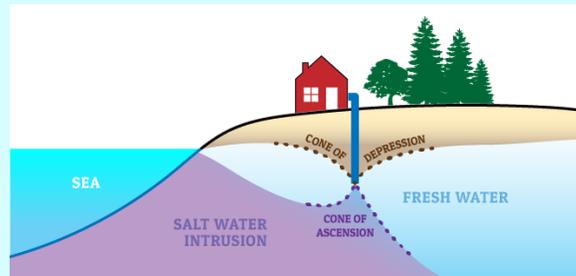
HOW WE USE OUR WATER IS ALL ABOUT BALANCE AND MODERATION.

THE BENEFITS OF IRRIGATION

- Promotes and sustains the health and growth of vegetation to the benefit of our community. Vegetation also aids and promotes the absorption of precipitation into our sole source aquifer, and it acts as a filtering system to help remove contaminants.
- Helps prevent soil hardening to maintain fertile, aerated and absorbent soil, which reduces/prevents runoff into our bays.
- Reduces the danger of forest or brush fire.

THE RISKS OF EXCESSIVE IRRIGATION

Excessive pumping for irrigation or other purposes in fragile nearshore areas can lead to upconing, where the salt water underneath our fresh water supply is pulled into the fresh water layer. This can lead to permanent salting of your well and those of your neighbors.



WATER DISTRICTS

If your water is provided by a water district, such as West Neck and the Shelter Island Heights, you are subject to the same risk of upconing by collective excessive pumping. A public well does not negate the need to conserve water! The water comes from a shared aquifer with inherent limitations.

IRRIGATION PERMITTED ON SHELTER ISLAND

Turf Irrigation Systems:

- All new turf irrigation systems require a permit from the Town with annual renewal.
- New turf systems require water be drawn from a cistern. Cisterns can be filled in two ways: collecting no more than 10% of precipitation from a property's impermeable solid surfaces or from off-Island water.
- New turf irrigation systems must be installed by a licensed professional and must conform to various water saving features such as programmable timers and moisture sensors.

DRIP IRRIGATION WITH NO PERMIT REQUIRED

Non-Nearshore Zone:

- A drip system may use well water as long as the system does not emit more than one gallon per hour/lineal foot with a max of 1,500 emitters.
- The drip system must be covered in mulch and must be on a timer. The drip system should be programmed to allow for no more than one hour for any three-day period per zone.

Nearshore Zones:

- A drip system may use well water as long as the number of emitters does not exceed 250.
- The drip system must be covered in mulch, and must have a master valve, timer and moisture sensor. The drip system should be programmed to allow for no more than one hour for any three-day period per zone.

NOTE: A permit is required for any system with a greater number of emitters than above and such systems must be cistern fed. A standard 1/2" drip hose may have one emitter per foot. As such, the limitations approximate 1,500 feet of drip hose and 250 feet of drip hose, respectively.

Temporary Drip System for New Plantings

Irrigation using longer drip lines is permitted to establish new plantings for a period of 150 days, and for use only between 5 pm and 9 am. A permit is required and after the 150 days, the drip lines must be removed.

BE AWARE

Many drip systems on Shelter Island do not conform to the legal requirements and there can be fines for violations. Many of these drip systems were likely installed without a permit for new plantings and were not removed after the 150 days.

EXEMPT IRRIGATION

- Hand watering.
- Temporary movable sprinklers.

Best Practices for Movable Sprinklers:

- Water only between 9 pm and 8 am.
- Use only one sprinkler at a time.
- Water up to 15 minutes per area with no more than 4 areas per day. Don't pump water for hours at a time!



DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS

The Town has the power to declare water restrictions due to drought conditions. Scan the QR code for information.



MANAGEMENT TIPS

Mowing Height

Adjust the height of your mower blade to cut at a height of 3-4" during hot, dry periods to protect the roots.

Watering Existing Turf

Water deeply and infrequently. The goal is to establish a strong and deep root system. Shallow watering causes shallow rooting.

Planting a New Lawn

Avoid seeding in July and August. High temperatures combined with potential dry conditions make growing grass difficult and is not worth the water expenditure. Lawn seeding should occur in spring or fall. Check with your landscape contractor if you are using the correct grass variety for sun, shade, dry, or moist soil.

ALTERNATIVE LANDSCAPES

- Consider shrinking an underused section of lawn and replacing it with drought-tolerant native plants that require less or little water once established. They also provide habitat for insects and birds.
- Maintain trees on your property. Trees absorb rain water, reduce runoff, and provide habitat.
- Create a rain garden or swale that is designed to absorb rainwater that runs off a hard surface or from higher areas for increased absorption.

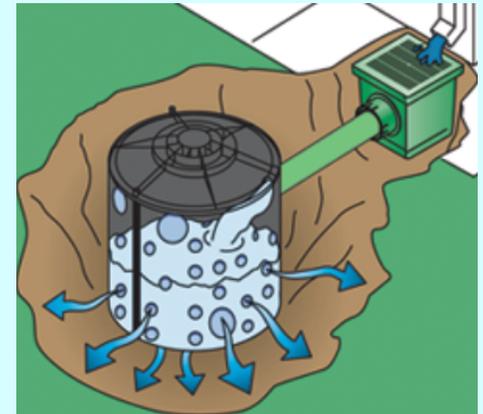
NATIVE PLANT LIST



SOURCE: THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

MOVING FORWARD

- Alternative irrigation and water capture models are evolving that are worth exploring, especially when doing new construction, renovations, and garden plantings.
- Shallow drainage fields for irrigation (or leaching fields) are a network of pipes and trenches that distribute wastewater from an Innovative Alternative Septic System to the soil.
- Consider installing a meter on your pump to better understand your water usage and help identify leaks.
- Dry wells are required for new construction and renovations to capture roof water.
- Consider proactively installing a dry well. As much as 50% of precipitation never reaches the aquifer due to evaporation and runoff among other factors.



SHELTER ISLAND TOWN IRRIGATION LAW

