

cost reductions in other plumbing system components, and reported savings over the long term easily pay back the higher initial cost.¹¹

EXTERIOR WATER SAVINGS

A large portion of Oklahoma's residential water is used outside the home, principally for lawn and garden irrigation. Due to its seasonal nature and the limited variety of fixtures, exterior water use has received less research and attention than interior water use.

An estimated 90 percent of exterior water use is for irrigating lawns, shrubs and home vegetable gardens; the remaining ten percent is used for car washing, swimming pools, and cleaning driveways, sidewalks, and streets. Following application, water is stored in plants, transpired, and evaporated. Some runs into storm drains or percolates to ground water.

Because of the large percentage of residential water used for landscape purposes, significant amounts of water can be saved by eliminating overwatering and reducing evapotranspiration.

Some of the water applied to plants and shrubs evaporates and some is used for growth. Water in excess of these quantities either runs off or percolates. Although water deficiency will hinder plant growth and productivity, plants that need only moderate or small amounts of water are usually overwatered. As a result, as much as 20 percent of all applied exterior water may represent overwatering.¹²

In 1977, the estimated statewide excessive exterior water use resulting from overwatering was estimated at 35,000 acre-feet; which could increase to 57,300 acre-feet by the year 2000.

Automatic sprinklers, except those with soil moisture override systems (sprinklers that are activated at predetermined soil moisture