

conditions), are best for the irrigation of larger areas such as parks. All automatic sprinkler systems need periodic adjustment due to seasonal climatic variations, sprinkler head adjustment and changes in infiltration rates. The readings from soil moisture testing devices must be carefully interpreted. Soil texture, depth of test and type of plant are important considerations. Well controlled, timed sprinkler systems would not entirely eliminate overwatering, but could reduce it by 50 percent.¹³

Eliminating overwatering would not necessarily result in an equal net water savings. In many areas this excess water is not irrevocably "lost", because much of it percolates to usable ground water where it is pumped and reused.

In Oklahoma, an estimated 70 percent of the applied exterior water is consumed through evapotranspiration (ET) by lawns, ornamentals and home gardens. A possible reduction in ET would require extensive reductions in the intensive water-using plants used by many Oklahoma homeowners -- a highly impractical measure. Little data on the types of plants growing on public and private land exists, so the potential water savings from such a change cannot be estimated.

Certain plants native to Oklahoma, e.g., some varieties of oak and pine, require less water than many of the exotics brought here from other states and foreign countries. There are also low water using plants imported from other parts of the world with climate similar to Oklahoma. However, most homeowners select plants on the basis of appearance, availability, rapid growth, hardiness and cost -- not on the basis of how much water they require. Few homeowners are probably aware