

Report: Over-irrigation occurring at nearly every Huntsville home reviewed



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Huntsville

Posted: Sunday, September 13, 2015 7:01 am

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The City of Huntsville enjoys being part of the community, working with organizations and individuals on many projects, events and initiatives. Recently, city staff members had the opportunity to assist on a research study with Sam Houston State University.

Associate professor Dr. Tim Pannkuk and assistant professor Dr. Art Wolfskill, in the Department of Agricultural Sciences & Engineering Technology at SHSU, reviewed three years of water usage and lot data for over 1,200 residential units in one local area (customer names and addresses were removed before the material was released to the researchers).

“We partnered with the City of Huntsville Public Works Department to study outdoor residential water use,” Pannkuk said. “Specifically, we examined how much overuse of water might be occurring in the landscape ... a documented common occurrence across the United States.”

Titled “Residential Outdoor Water Use in One East Texas Community,” the report found over-irrigation to be occurring at almost all of the units reviewed, based on the scientists’ estimates of indoor water usage and outdoor irrigation.

The study was recently featured in the Texas Water Journal, an online, peer-reviewed journal devoted to water resources management and policy issues, published in cooperation with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas A&M University.

Water conservation is a hot topic across Texas, and the study noted that it is often urged by municipalities, particularly in relation to landscape watering. The researchers found outdoor water use accounted for 64 percent of the total water use by the households studied, and determined that, “based on the data overall, greater conservation efforts in landscape irrigation are crucial for Texas residents if water demands are to be met in the 21st century.”

“We would like to further study methods of developing better educational outreach opportunities to help homeowners understand how to better conserve this precious natural resource,” Pannkuk added.

The professor went on to note that Robert Mace, deputy executive administrator for the Water Science and Conservation Division of the Texas Water Development Board, referenced the work in a presentation at the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association in Dallas in August.

“Mr. Mace was discussing the state of water in Texas, and more specifically the need for greater water conservation now, to help ensure a plentiful water supply in Texas’ future,” relayed Pannkuk. Mace, he said, used the study published in the Texas Water Journal as an example of the opportunity that exists for education in water conservation.

1. http://www.itemonline.com/news/local_news/report-over-irrigation-occurring-at-nearly-every-huntsville-home-reviewed/article_9295b7db-f3be-5636-b63e-1e33e189fd2e.html?mode=image&photo=0
2. http://itemonline.com/news/local_news/report-over-irrigation-occurring-at-nearly-every-huntsville-home-reviewed/article_9295b7db-f3be-5636-b63e-1e33e189fd2e.html