

Conserving Outside - Tips and Suggestions

- ◆ Avoid overwatering your lawn. A hearty rain eliminates the need for watering for as long as two weeks! Before watering, you can check the root zone of your lawn or garden for moisture by using a spade or trowel. If it's moist two inches under the soil surface, you can hold off on watering.
- ◆ Recycle rain water. By hooking up a rain barrel to your downspout. Use the collected water on your lawn and garden.
- ◆ Plant it smart. By landscaping and gardening in ways that reduce or eliminate the need for supplemental water from irrigation, you will save you time, money and water. This is sometimes called "xeriscaping" or "naturescaping". For more info on naturescaping visit the **Environmental Protection Agency's Landscaping with Native Plants Website** at www.epa.gov/greenacres.
- ◆ Water lawns during the early morning hours or late in the afternoon. This reduces wasting water due to evaporation.
- ◆ Position your sprinklers so that your water lands on the lawn and gardens ... not the paved areas.
- ◆ Use sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of water-efficient methods of watering.
- ◆ Regularly check sprinkler systems and timing devices to be sure they are operating



properly with no leaks.

- ◆ Eliminate leaks. Use hose washers between spigots and water hoses to eliminate leaks. When finished, turn hose off at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.
- ◆ Raise your lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely-clipped lawn.
- ◆ Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. Applying fertilizers increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers which contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.
- ◆ Use mulch. Mulching retains moisture in the soil and helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water.
- ◆ Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk to save water every time. Using a hose to clean a driveway can waste hundreds of gallons of water!
- ◆ Avoid unattended hoses and sprinklers. Your garden hoses can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours! Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn it off.
- ◆ When washing your car, consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your own car, park on the grass to do so rather than on a paved surface where the water can't get soaked up.
- ◆ Avoid ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water recycles. Locate where there are minimal losses due to evaporation and wind drift.
- ◆ Do you have a swimming pool or hot tub? Consider a new water-saving pool filter. A single back flushing with a traditional filter uses from 180 to 250 gallons or more of water. Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps.



Water Conservation Around The Home



How to
Save Money and
Conserve Water

*Prepared and Distributed by YOUR
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Conserving Inside - Tips and Suggestions

DID YOU KNOW...

If you are on a sewer system, your sewer bill is calculated on how much water you use.

So when you conserve water in the home, you will also save money on your water and sewer bill.



- ◆ Is your home leak-free? Find out by reading your water meter before and after a two hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak.
- ◆ Check for toilet tank leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. Check the toilet for worn out, corroded or bent parts. Most replacement parts are inexpensive, readily available and easily installed. (Flush as soon as test is done, since food coloring may stain tank.)
- ◆ Avoid flushing toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other such waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- ◆ Upgrade older toilets with water efficient models. With older toilets, place a brick or plastic bottle filled with sand or gravel in the tank. Be



- ◆ sure they are out of the way of any moving parts.
- ◆ Teach your children to turn off faucets tightly after each use.
- ◆ Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the sink basin.
- ◆ Take shorter showers. Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.
- ◆ Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version. Some units are available that allow you to cut off the flow without adjusting the water temperature knobs.
- ◆ Conserve bath water. Use the minimum amount of water needed for a bath by closing the drain first and filling the tub only 1/3 full. Stopper tub before turning the water on. The initial burst of cold water can be warmed by adding hot water later.
- ◆ For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.
- ◆ Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap. Empty the pan of water on your house plants or garden.
- ◆ Operate dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or properly set the water level for the size of load you are using.
- ◆ When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Put clean dishes in drainer in other sink and rinse all at once.
- ◆ Kitchen sink disposals require lots of water to operate properly. Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing of food waste.
- ◆ Garbage disposals are hard on septic systems; they add up to 50% more solids to the septic tank which



can lead to malfunctions and maintenance problems.

- ◆ Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up.
- ◆ Retrofit all wasteful household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
- ◆ Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can waste 2,700 gallons per year which adds to the cost of water and sewer utilities, or strains your septic system.
- ◆ Insulate your water pipes. You'll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats up.
- ◆ Never install a water-to-air heat pump or AC system. Air-to-air models are just as efficient and don't waste water.
- ◆ Install water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum amount of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness. Turn softeners off while on vacation.



Please share these tips with

family and friends...

Do your part and
save yourself money!

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Soil & Water
Conservation District
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