

Water Conservation Tips

Household Hints to Conserve Water and Money

Nine ways that will save the most:

1. Water your lawn only when it needs it. Step on your grass. If it springs back, when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water. So set your sprinklers for more days in between watering. Saves 750-1,500 gallons per month. Better yet, especially in times of drought, water with a hose.
2. Fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints. Saves 20 gallons per day for every leak stopped.
3. Don't run the hose while washing your car. Use a bucket of water and a quick hose rinse at the end. Saves 150 gallons each time. For a two-car family that's up to 1,200 gallons a month.
4. Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors. Saves 500 to 800 gallons per month.
5. Run only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher. Saves 300 to 800 gallons per month.
6. Shorten your showers. Even a one or two minute reduction can save up to 700 gallons per month.
7. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks. Saves 150 gallons or more each time. At once a week, that's more than 600 gallons a month.
8. Don't use your toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket. Saves 400 to 600 gallons per month.
9. Don't water the sidewalks, driveway or gutter. Adjust your sprinklers so that water lands on your lawn or garden where it belongs--and only there. Saves 500 gallons per month.

In the bathroom:

1. Put a plastic bottle or a plastic bag weighted with pebbles and fill with water in your toilet tank. Displacing water in this manner allows you to use less water with each flush. Saves 5 to 10 gallons a day. That's up to 300 gallons a month, even more for large families. Better yet, for even greater savings, replace your water-guzzling five to seven gallon a flush toilet with a three and a half gallon, low flush, or one and a half gallon, ultra-low flush model.
2. Check toilet for leaks. Put dye tablets or food coloring into the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there's leak that should be repaired. Saves 400 gallons a month.
3. Turn off water while brushing your teeth. Saves three gallons each day.
4. Turn off the water while shaving. Fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of water to rinse you razor. Saves three gallons each day.

In the kitchen and laundry:

1. If you wash dishes by hand--and that's the best way--don't leave the water running for rinsing. If you have two sinks, fill one with rinse water. If you only have one sink, use a spray device or short blasts instead of letting the water run. Saves 200 to 500 gallons a month.

2. When washing dishes by hand, use the least amount of detergent possible. This minimizes rinse water needed. Saves 50 to 150 gallons a month.
3. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. This beats the wasteful habit of running tap water to cool it for drinking. Saves 200 to 300 gallons a month.
4. Don't defrost frozen foods with running water. Either plan ahead by placing frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or defrost them in the microwave. Saves 50 to 150 gallons a month.
5. Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables. Rinse them in a filled sink or pan. Saves 150 to 250 gallons a month.
6. Use the garbage disposal less and the garbage more (even better--compost!). Saves 50 to 150 gallons a month.

Outside:

1. Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Chunks of bark, peat moss or gravel slows down evaporation. Saves 750 to 1,500 gallons a month.
2. If you have a pool, use a pool cover to cut down on evaporation. It will also keep your pool cleaner and reduce the need to add chemicals. Saves 1,000 gallons a month.
3. Water during the cool parts of the day. Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus. Saves 300 gallons.
4. Don't water the lawn on windy days. There's too much evaporation. Can waste up to 300 gallons in one watering.
5. Cut down watering on cool and overcast days and don't water in the rain. Adjust or deactivate automatic sprinklers. Can save up to 300 gallons each time.
6. Set lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation. Saves 500 to 1,500 gallons each month.
7. Drive your car onto a lawn to wash it. Rinse water can help water the grass.
8. Tell your children not to play with the garden hose. Saves 10 gallons a minute.
9. If you allow your children to play in sprinklers, make sure it's only when your watering the yard--if it's not too cool at that time of day.
10. When taking your car to a car wash--a good idea for saving water--be sure it's one of the many that recycles its wash water.
11. Xeriscape--replace your lawn and high-water-using trees and plants with less thirsty ones. But do this only in wet years. Even drought resistant plantings take extra water to get them going. That'll save 750 to 1,500 gallons a month.