

Conserving Water is Easy and Free!

1. Check your toilet for leaks.

Put a few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, you have a leak that may be wasting more than 100 gallons of water a day.

2. Don't use your toilet as a wastebasket

Older toilets waste five to seven gallons of water with each flush.

3. Put a plastic bottle in your toilet tank

Put an inch or two of sand or pebbles in the bottom of a one liter bottle to weigh it down. Fill the rest of the bottle with water and put it in your toilet tank. In an average home, the bottle may save five gallons or more of water every day without harming the efficiency of the toilet.

4. Take shorter showers

A typical shower uses five to ten gallons of water a minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rise off.

5. Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors

Okay, these aren't free, but they're very inexpensive and easy to install, too! Most will cut your shower flow to about three gallons a minute instead of five to ten.

6. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth

Before brushing, wet your brush and fill a glass for rinsing your mouth.

7. Turn off the water while shaving

Fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of warm water in which to rinse your razor.

8. Check faucets and pipes for leaks

Even a small drip can waste 50 or more gallons of water a day.

9. Use your automatic dishwasher for full loads only

Running your dishwasher less often saves water and money.

10. When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running

Put a big bowl with soapy hot water in the sink and wash without running the water. Then, gather all your washed dishes in a dish rack, then rinse them quickly with a spray device or a pan of water.

11. Use your automatic washing machine only for full loads only

Your automatic washer uses 30 to 35 gallons per cycle.

12. Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables

Rinse your vegetables instead in a bowl or sink full of clean water.

13. Check faucets and pipes for leaks

Leaks waste water 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Often, it's an inexpensive fix.

14. Water during the cool parts of the day and never when it's windy

Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

15. Reuse waste water

"Gray water" is the water from your house's sinks, bathtubs, and laundry machine, which can be used to water plants. You can collect gray water in a small way with a bucket in your kitchen sink or a 5-gallon bucket in your shower.

16. Use rain barrels

...or large pots or containers to capture valuable rainwater from your roof drains. Plants prefer untreated water, so your garden will be healthier while you cut your water bill.

17. Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps

Using a hose wastes hundreds and hundreds of gallons of water.

18. Don't wash your car at home

It's inexpensive and more fun to use the self-wash option at the local car wash!

19. Tell your children not to play with the hose and sprinklers

Children love to play under a hose or sprinkler on a hot day. Unfortunately, this practice is extremely wasteful of precious water and should be discouraged.

20. Check for leaks in outside pipes, hoses faucets and couplings

Leaks outside the house are easier to ignore since they don't mess up the floor, and the repair is often inexpensive.

For Gardeners: During the Ban, Use a Watering Can!

Water During the Early Parts of the Day; Avoid Watering When It Is Windy

Early morning is generally better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus. Early watering and late watering also reduce water loss to evaporation. Watering early in the day is also the best defense against slugs and other garden pests.



Add Organic Matter to Your Garden Beds

Adding organic material to your soil will help increase its absorption and water retention. Areas that are already planted can be 'top dressed' with compost or organic matter every year. Turn a healthy dose of compost into new garden beds when preparing the soil for planting.

Harvest Rainwater for Watering Vegetable Beds

Use rain barrels or a catchment system to capture valuable rainwater from your roof. Plants prefer untreated water, so your garden will be healthier while you cut your water bill.

Control Weeds to Reduce Competition for Water in the Garden

Weeds use water, too! If you don't weed, the garden invaders will take up water meant for your plants. A good layer of mulch around your plants not only conserves soil moisture but helps keep weeds under control.

Plant Drought-resistant Lawns, Shrubs, and Plants

If you are planting a new lawn, or overseeding an existing lawn, use drought-resistant grasses. Buy native plants. Native plants will use less water and be more resistant to local plant diseases. Plant slopes with plants that will retain water and help reduce runoff. Group plants according to their watering needs.

Mulch Around Trees and Plants

Mulch will slow evaporation of moisture while discouraging weed growth. Adding 2 - 4 inches of organic material such as compost or bark mulch will increase the ability of the soil to retain moisture. Press the mulch down around the drip line of each plant to form a slight depression, which will prevent or minimize water runoff.

Avoid watering the lawn during the ban this summer! After the ban, water your lawn only when it needs it (and never when it's windy)

A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water. If it stays flat, the lawn is ready for watering. Letting the grass grow taller (to 3") will also promote water retention in the soil.