

Water Conservation Tips

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Next to air, water is the most important element for the preservation of life. Water is a finite commodity which, if not managed properly, will result in shortages in the near future. Water conservation can go a long way to help alleviate these impending shortages.

When remodeling a house, it is advisable to replace water-guzzling fixtures with WaterSense certified ones, available at local stores (Home Depot, Menards, Lowes, etc.). Residential fixtures certified by WaterSense include toilets, showerheads, and bathroom faucets. These fixtures can save approximately 25-30% of your water consumption compared to older models and can be identified by this seal:



Below are valuable tips that can be used in every household, resulting in water savings and conservation for the whole neighborhood.

In the Kitchen:

- **Dishwashing:** When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run. Fill one basin with wash water and the other with rinse water. Dishwashers typically use less water than washing dishes by hand – only 2 gallons of water, which is the usage when dishes are washed by hand in less than 3 minutes. If your dishwasher is new, cut back on pre-rinsing as newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.
- **Shopping for Dishwashers:** Use the Consortium for Energy Efficiency website to compare water use between models.

- **Reuse Glasses:** Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
- **Cooking:** Cook food in as little water as possible to help retain more nutrients. Select the proper pan size for cooking, as large pans may require more cooking water than necessary.

In the Bathroom:

- **Showers:** Shorten your shower by a minute or two to save up to 150 gallons per month. Time your shower to keep it under five minutes to save up to 1,000 gallons per month. Take showers instead of baths, as a full bathtub requires up to 70 gallons of water. When running a bath, plug the bathtub before turning on the water and adjust the temperature as the tub fills.
- **Toilet Maintenance:** Toilet leaks can be silent. Test your toilet for leaks at least once a year by putting food coloring in your toilet tank; if it seeps into the bowl without flushing, there's a leak. Replace the toilet flapper if it doesn't close properly after flushing. If your toilet was installed before 2006, purchasing a WaterSense labeled toilet can reduce the amount of water used for each flush. Consider buying a dual-flush toilet for further savings.
- **Showerheads and Faucets:** Use a WaterSense labeled showerhead to save up to 750 gallons a month. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and washing your hands. Plug the sink instead of running the water to rinse your razor to save up to 300 gallons a month. Install water-saving aerators on all of your faucets. Drop tissues in the trash instead of flushing them to save water. Check faucets and showerheads for leaks; one drip every second adds up to five gallons per day.

Outdoor:

- **Plant Grouping:** Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid overwatering some while underwatering others.
- **Lawn Reduction:** Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground covers appropriate to your site and region. Plant native species to your area.
- **Composting and Mulching:** Start a compost pile to add water-holding organic matter to the soil. Use a layer of organic mulch on the surface of planting beds to minimize weed growth that competes for water. Spreading a layer of organic

mulch around plants helps retain moisture, saving water, time, and money. Use two to four inches of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.

- **Low-Water Plants:** Next time you add or replace a flower or shrub, choose a low-water-use plant to save up to 550 gallons each year.
- **Rain Barrels and Irrigation:** Use rain barrels (55 gallons) to collect rainwater for use in the garden. Use drip irrigation to water the vegetable garden efficiently.

Remember, every drop of water counts. Let's work together to conserve this precious resource.