

Water Conservation Tips For the Outdoors

Saves more than most people would guess!



Watering lawns and gardens accounts for 50 to 70 percent of American household water use.

A few easy ways to reduce your outdoor water use can save the environment — and save you money!

- **Don't overwater your lawn.** One inch of water per week in the summer will keep most grasses healthy. To figure out how long to run your sprinkler, set a can or rain gauge under the sprinkler and see how long it takes to fill an inch of water. That's how long to water each week.
- **Don't water your lawn during the hottest part of the day** or when it's windy. The water just evaporates.
- **Improve your soil.** Add compost, shredded leaves, or peat moss so your soil will hold more water.
- **Check regularly for leaky faucets** and get them repaired quickly.
- **Don't mow your lawn too short!** Mowing too short stresses your lawn and increases water lost to evaporation. Keep grass at least three inches tall during the summer.
- **Leave grass clippings on the lawn.** They provide free fertilizer that doesn't pollute runoff.
- **Consider exchanging your traditional lawn for native trees, shrubs, and ground cover** that don't require as much water — or as much mowing! Natives are also more resistant to pests and disease, and are more wildlife friendly.
- **Mulch your beds!** Apply bark, wood chips, shredded leaves or straw to planting beds to retain moisture, discourage weeds, and provide nutrients to your plants.
- **Consider installing drip irrigation for your beds.** Drip irrigation uses half as much water as sprinklers. Add an automatic shutoff device to prevent overwatering. There are many kinds, including wind-up timers for faucets and timed automatic watering systems. There are even systems that check on the internet to see if the weather conditions are agreeable to watering and set your system accordingly!
- **Capture rainwater from downspouts** in cisterns or rain barrels. Cover with lids or fine mesh to prevent mosquito breeding. (Note: rainwater collection is not legal in all communities.)
- **Cover pools and spas when not in use.** Over the summer, this can prevent evaporation losses equal to the volume of your pool.
- **Don't hose down your driveway** or sidewalk. Use a broom!

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EASY Things You Can Do To Save Water INDOORS

- Fix water leaks promptly! You'll sleep better if the drips stop dripping and the toilet doesn't run. Rubber washers in faucets and flappers in toilets wear out over time. To test the seal on your flapper, add some food coloring to your toilet tank and see if it leaks into the bowl.
- Shut the water off while shaving, brushing your teeth, cleaning up the kitchen and doing other things that only require sporadic water. Turn it on when you need it, turn it off till you need it again.
- Replace your showerhead with a water-efficient model. This simple and inexpensive chore can save up to six gallons of water per minute!
- Take short showers. It saves water and doesn't dry out your skin as much.
- Never run the dishwasher or clothes washer without a full load. Use a short wash cycle if you can. Soak pans in the sink rather than scrubbing them under running water.
- Install faucet aerators. They cut your water consumption in half, and you'll never notice the difference.
- To test for hidden leaks, turn off all water-using appliances, take a reading of your water meter, and then twenty minutes later take another reading.

Not-Quite-As-Easy Things That Yield a BIG Dividend

- Recycle your toilet and replace it with a water efficient model. This saves up to five gallons per flush! Some cities offer a rebate if you install a water-efficient toilet. If you can't replace your toilet now, then put a plastic bottle filled with water in the tank to reduce the volume of water per flush. (Do NOT use bricks.)
- When shopping for a new dishwasher or clothes washer, buy a water efficient model. Conventional washing machines use up to 55 gallons of water per load. Look for tags on the various models showing how much water they use. Be sticker smart. Even if the water efficient model costs a little more, you'll save money in the long run on water bills and energy bills. And some cities offer rebates for these, too.
- Insulate hot water pipes. You'll waste less water waiting for it to get hot.



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