



Water Conservation



Faucet aerators can be purchased from local hardware stores and are easy to install.

Water is undeniably important to all life on earth. Every living species relies upon water as one of its basic life requirements. Think of the ways we depend upon water and the conflicts that arise between ecological, technological, and human settlements have developed around important sources of water. Agriculture and industry thrive on it. Wars have been fought over it. Droughts have focused public attention on the plight of those who survive with a dwindling water supply. Even so, do we still believe that there is an unlimited supply of water for human use?

Background Information

Each day, the average American uses an average of 183 gallons per day (1990). This demand requires stream and river impoundments, the drilling of more and deeper wells, and water withdrawals from most natural water bodies across the country.

The high demand for and overuse of water can also contribute to water pollution in various forms: altered instream flows due to surface withdrawals, saltwater intrusion due to excessive withdrawals, and polluted runoff resulting from the excess of water applied for irrigation and landscape maintenance that carries with it sediments, nutrients, salts, and other pollutants.

The Facts on Our Water Supply

Did you know that of the world's water supply, 97% is found in the oceans? Another 2% is locked up in the ice caps and glaciers leaving only about 1% for human use. This amount is unevenly distributed and hard to access.

Of this 1%, about two-thirds is used by agriculture and about one-fourth is used by industry. Additional industrial demands and our increasing human population is expected to place ever greater demands on current water supplies.

Developing a Conservation Ethic

Even though we use water every day, it's easy to take it for granted. Just imagine how you would function without clean water. It is everyone's responsibility to conserve and protect water resources. Developing a conservation ethic is the cornerstone of any successful environmental management program.

Getting Started

The first step in conserving water and increasing efficiency is to audit water use practices and mechanical devices at your home or workplace. Where do you use the most water? Where is water wasted? Are you as efficient as you can be?

Making a commitment to practice efficient water use and conservation will make a significant difference to you and the surrounding businesses, schools and homes in your community. Water conservation has much more than a practical purpose, it should become the way you approach everyday actions. The decisions and actions you make today truly affect our water resources for the future.

Water Conservation Tips

There are many ways that you can save water. In fact, you can reduce your water consumption by 20- 40% without purchasing expensive equipment or being inconvenienced. Reducing water use can mean substantial savings on water, sewage and energy bills. If you have a septic tank, water reduction can prevent drain field overloads and require less energy for pumping well water. Simple water conservation practices can prolong the life and performance of your septic system.

Good water use habits are the key to saving water. Many conservation techniques are simple common sense ideas. Other practices may not be so obvious. The following suggestions will help you evaluate our water use and get in the habit of saving water.

Kitchen

- If you have garbage disposal, remember that this appliance uses a great deal of unnecessary water. It is a sewer or septic tank and can lead to problems with septic systems and in sewage treatment. Start a compost pile instead!
- Run automatic dishwashers only with a full load.
- If washing dishes in the sink, use one side of the sink or a large bowl to hold rinse water, rather than running water.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. If you have to run your tap while waiting for cold water, collect running water in pitcher for later use.
- Using washing machines only with full clothing loads and always set load dial on appropriate settings

A toilet that leaks for 6 months can waste 45,000 gallons of water.

Bathroom

- Conventional toilets use about 5 to 7 gallons of water per flush. Water used for each flush can be reduced to approximately 3 gallons by placing two half-gallon plastic bottles filled with water in the tank. Be sure to place bottles where they won't interfere with the flushing mechanisms.
- When purchasing a new toilet, choose a low-flow model. These use as little as 1.5 gallons per flush.
- Check for leakage in your toilet tank. Add some food coloring to your tank and note if any appears in the bowl without flushing. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak.
- Install a low-flow aerator on your showerhead and sink. These devices can be purchased at a hardware store and are easy to install. They reduce flow to approximately 3 gallons per minute instead of the usual 5 to 10 in a shower.
- Don't run tap water while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Take shorter showers. During droughts, turn off water while soaping up. Less than 5 minutes for a shower should be adequate.
- Stopper the bathtub before turning on water. Adding hot water later can warm initial cold water. Don't overfill your tub. A bathtub holds more than 50 gallons of water.
- If you have young children, you can save bath water by using a plastic storage container in the bathtub. Filling the container rather than the whole tub will save several gallons of water. Reuse the bath water on outdoor plantings.

Laundry

- When you buy a new machine, select one that uses the least water per pound of wash. Be sure to check energy consumption too, and purchase the machine that uses less water and energy.
- Use washing machines only with full clothing loads and always set load dial on appropriate settings.

Outdoors

- Get a rain gauge to measure rainfall. One inch of rain per week is generally sufficient for lawns and gardens. Supplement only when rainfall is inadequate.
- Use mulch around landscape plantings. Mulch will help eliminate weeds and hold moisture in the soil.



Save energy, too, by hanging clothes out to dry when possible.

An outdoor hose running for one hour can use 375 gallons of water.

- Select hardy plants that don't need much water. Native plants that are well adapted to your climate and soils will survive well without supplemental watering.
- Leaving the hose running for 1 hour uses 375 gallons. Water your lawn during the cool part of the day to avoid rapid evaporation.
- Raise the mowing heights on your lawn mower. This promotes healthier grass that can better survive dry periods.
- When watering is necessary, water slowly and thoroughly. If you notice puddles or runoff, turn water off and wait for water to soak in. Also be sure that your sprinkler puts water where you need it—not on driveways or sidewalks.
- Wash cars efficiently. First give the car a quick rinse, and then turn the water off. Wash one section of the car at a time and rinse that section quickly. Turn the water off each time.

e-Source

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