

Water Conservation Fact Sheet

Less than 3% of the water on earth is fresh: 1% of this is available for drinking and 2% is frozen or deep within the earth.

At least 1 billion people must walk three (3) hours or more to obtain drinking water. Nearly 2% of the US homes have no running water. In Mexico, 15% of the population must haul or carry water. (National Geographic survey)

If present consumption patterns continue, one (1) out of three (3) persons on earth will live in water-stressed conditions by year 2025. (United Nations Environment Program)

In 1995 the US total withdrawal was 340 billion gallons per day, 65% from surface water and 35% from ground water. (USGS)

The average Southwest Floridian uses about 100 gallons of water a day for personal needs. Two-thirds of it is used in the bathroom. Toilets account for 40 percent of indoor water use, and showers and baths consume another 30 percent. Washing machines and dishwashers take 15 percent. Ongoing toilet, faucet and other leaks can as much as double your water and wastewater charges. See www.bsu.us and www.sfwmd.gov

Do something every day to save water. Every drop counts!

What can homeowners do to help?

Conservation is the greatest resource when it comes to our water supply. You can help conserve water in the following ways:

Basics:

Toilet flush = 5 gallons

Dishwasher = 12 gallons per load

Washing machine = 47 gallons per load

Bath = 36 gallons per tub

Brushing teeth, showering or washing hands = 4 gallons per minute

Yard hose = 9 gallons per minute

Pool covers = 60-70% less evaporation

Inside:

- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons per year.
- Brushing teeth: Turn off the tap while brushing (saves 2-4 gallons).
- Washing hands & face: use a washcloth and turn off the tap (saves 2-4 gallons).
- Shaving: use a mug and turn off the tap (saves 2-4 gallons). Grow a beard and save more than 100 gallons per week.
- Shower: Rinse, turn off water to soap, rinse again (saves 13-18 gallons). Check out water efficient showerheads at www.niagaraconservation.com
- Thaw foods in a microwave or pan of water, not under running water.
- Hand wash dishes in one sink of water and rinse in a second to eliminate running water.
- If you have an automatic dishwasher, use it. It consumes a third less water than hand washing, which saves energy and money.
- Dishwasher: don't run unless it's full. Avoid pre-rinsing dishes before putting in dishwasher. It can save up to \$70 a year. Use the energy-saving

cycle to shorten the run time and use no-heat drying.

- Use the minimum amount of detergent required for any job, allowing heavily soiled items to presoak. Natural detergents are best.
- Choose a sponge mop and pail, not a string mop and running water.
- Washing machine: don't run unless it's full.
- Adjust the water level on your washing machine to match the load size, especially when using hot water. Always use a cold rinse.
- Skip bottled water and/ or refill/ reuse water bottles. If you must drink bottled water, purchase local, not imported, water.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting water run from the tap.
- Order tap water in restaurants rather than imported water in a throwaway bottle.
- Toss leftover ice nearby a plant.
- Save cooking water for nutritious soup stock, or use it to nourish your houseplants.
- Keep a soft water tank's regenerating cycles to a minimum. Turn it off during vacation.

- When you give your pet fresh water, pour the old water on a plant.
- Bathe pets outdoors in an area that needs watering.
- When you clean a fish tank, use the drained water on plants. Rich in nitrogen and phosphorus, it's a good fertilizer. Fill your aquarium with farm-raised fish.
- Appliance replacement: choose those with Energy Star labels. See www.energystar.gov
- Use low flow fixtures: e.g. toilets, showerheads, faucets, hose guns.
- Don't use toilets as wastebaskets. Avoid unnecessary toilet flushes.
- NEVER flush medicines down the toilet unless absolutely necessary.
- Water leaks: fix immediately.
- Check your toilet for leaks by placing food coloring in the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak that should be repaired.
- Eat the right kind of sustainable fish: see www.oceansalive.org
- Conserve water when you are staying at a hotel by requesting fewer replacement towels and sheet changes.

Outside:

- Use native plants. Use drought-resistant plants. See www.sfwmd.gov and www.swcaonline.com. Group plants in "zones" that have similar water needs. Plant native and drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees to save as much as 30 to 60 percent of your water bill.
- Minimize grass areas in your yard because less grass means less water demand. Replace with low-water use landscaping.
- Prune plants properly. Excessive or improper pruning increases the need for water.
- A typical garden hose can deliver water at a rate of at least five (5) gallons per minutes. Over eight hours, this equates to 2,400 gallons per day.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons per year.
- Fix leaks immediately.
- Use mulch (never cypress mulch). This keeps soil cooler and reduces evaporation. Mulch

also controls water-hungry weeds and retains moisture for plants and trees.

- NEVER put fertilizers or pesticides on concrete or asphalt. - sweep up and apply to lawn or plantings or place back in the bag.
- Shunt gutters to areas of plantings.
- NEVER sewer anything to the storm sewers.
- Inspect your rain sensor every spring to make sure it is functioning for wet season.
- Inspect your irrigation system for broken heads, improper alignment and overall proper performance in the fall for dry season.
- Use irrigation timers. Most Irrigation timers (clocks) have back up batteries that should be changed at least yearly.
- Water your lawn only when it needs it. Step on the grass. If it springs back, when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water. BSU studies show that watering your lawn just 80 times a year, instead

of the usual 150, will save thousands of gallons while maintaining healthy turf.

- Obey the water restrictions published in the newspaper daily.
- RCS recommends watering landscape and plants no more than 3 times per week: Address with odd number: Monday, Wednesday, Saturday; Addresses: with even numbers: Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday. See www.sfwmd.gov/conserve
- Use sprinklers that cast big drops of water close to the ground, because smaller drops can evaporate before they reach the plants. Water roots rather than leaves.
- Adjust sprinklers: don't water the house, sidewalk or street.
- Mow taller to retain water that would normally be lost to evaporation. Raise your lawnmower blade



to three inches or more to protect the grass. Sharpen your blades to reduce stress on the grass. See www.NoMowGrass.com

- Apply slow-release fertilizers with water-insoluble nitrogen, and use them less often. Avoid over fertilizing your lawn as this increases the need for water. Postpone fertilizer applications if it looks like rain. Follow the Fertilizer Fact Sheet on line at www.swcaonline.com
- Dig trenches around plants to catch water.
- Retain lower branches on trees and scrubs and use mulch. This keeps soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
- Use a broom, not a hose, to clean sidewalks and driveways (saves 80+ gallons).
- Don't wash cars in your driveway, head to a commercial car wash that re-circulates water (saves 100 gallons).
- Report malfunctioning sprinklers and run times.
- Use porous materials for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and to prevent wasteful runoff.
- By maintaining your pool's cleanliness, water clarity and chemical levels, you may be able to reduce your pool pump's run time and save up to \$100 per year.
- Limit the time you run your pool pump: Summer: no more than six hours a day. Winter: no more than four hours a day. Reducing the run time of a one-horsepower pool pump from eight hours per day to four hours can save you \$13 a month.
- Install a new water-saving filter for your swimming pool.
- Avoid installing fountains or other ornamental water features unless they use recycled water. Properly adjust them so that water does not fall outside of the catch basin.

See: www.bsu.us, www.sfwmd.gov (note tab for residents), www.h2ouse.org, www.epa.gov/watersense, www.wateruseitwisely.com, www.fpl.com, www.awwa.org, www.floridaturf.com, www.dep.state.fl.us, www.regionalconservation.org

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