

100 Ways to Save Water

Water Saving Tips: Outdoors

Lawns, Plants and Watering

- 1) Adjust sprinklers so only the lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.
- 2) Choose shrubs and groundcover instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips. Trees and shrubs can also reduce the amount of lawn in general areas of the yard.
- 3) When watering sloped areas or areas where water runs off easily, water slow and in short five minute increments to ensure effective absorption and less runoff.
- 4) Plant in the fall, if supported by the planting instructions of your product, when conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful.
- 5) Water the lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.
- 6) When using soaker hoses make sure the holes face down to avoid evaporation.
- 7) Spread a layer of organic mulch around plants, trees and flower beds. The mulch retains moisture, saves water, time and money and reduces the growth of weeds which compete for water.
- 8) Set an annual time to check outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses for leaks.
- 9) Adjust the lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds soil moisture better than if it is closely clipped.
- 10) Water small patches of grass by hand and use sprinklers for large areas to avoid waste.
- 11) Collect water from the roof and rain gutters for use on indoor and outdoor plants. Direct the rain gutters toward dry areas on the yard or plants with high water needs.
- 12) Rather than following a set watering schedule, check for soil moisture two to three inches below the surface with a spade or trowel before watering. If there is moisture watering can be delayed.
- 13) Install a rain sensor on automatic irrigation controllers so the system won't run when it's raining.
- 14) Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it is needed.
- 15) Don't water the lawn on windy days. Most of the water blows away or evaporates.

- 16) Water plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.
- 17) Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid over-watering some while under-watering others.
- 18) Use a minimum amount of organic or slow release fertilizer to promote a healthy and drought tolerant landscape with a strong root system. A lawn with a good root system requires less watering.
- 19) Use a rain gauge, or empty tuna can, to track rainfall on your lawn. Then reduce your watering accordingly.
- 20) Replace flowers and shrubs with low water use plants for year-round landscape color and savings of up to 550 gallons of water each year.
- 21) Consult with local nurseries for information on plant selection and placement for optimum outdoor water savings.
- 22) Winterize outdoor spigots when temperatures dip below freezing to prevent pipes from leaking or bursting.
- 23) Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
- 24) Let the lawn go dormant during the summer. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three weeks or less if it rains.
- 25) Use sprinklers that deliver big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller water drops and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground.
- 26) Consider using an automatic watering system set for times between 4:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- 27) Over-watering can kill plants just as well as under-watering. Over-watering overloads the soil and encourages plant disease.
- 28) Wash pets outdoors in an area of the lawn that needs water.
- 29) Aerate the lawn at least once a year so water can reach the roots rather than run off the surface.
- 30) Know exactly how long it takes to put one inch of water on the lawn. One inch of water on one square foot of grass equals two-thirds of a gallon of water. Measure how long it takes to reach this level by placing a tuna can under the spray of the sprinkler; start a timer, once the level of water in the can reaches one inch the testing is complete. You now know how long it takes to put an inch of water on your lawn. The recommended amount of water for most lawns in Texas is an inch to an inch-and-a-half per week.
- 31) Decorate areas of the yard that do not use water or won't grow grass with rocks, gravel, wood chips or other materials.
- 32) When installing or replacing a lawn select a turf mix or blend that matches the climate and site conditions of the area.

Pools

- 33) When pools and spas are not in use, keep them covered to reduce evaporation.
- 34) Check the pool and pool pump periodically for leaks.
- 35) Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water.
- 36) If you have a pool heater, try reducing the temperature during the summer. Doing so reduces evaporation losses
- 37) Turn off all unnecessary fountains and waterfalls. Use timers to automatically shutoff fountains, waterfalls and pool filters when not needed. This will reduce the amount of water lost to aeration and evaporation.
- 38) Avoid excessive splashing games or splashing water out of the pool.

Car Washing

- 39) Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- 40) Wash the car on the lawn, and the lawn get's watered at the same time.
- 41) When washing your car use a hose nozzle with a shut off valve. This will save up to 100 gallons with every washing.

General Outdoor Tips

- 42) Save more water and money by using a broom instead of a hose to clean the driveway or sidewalk.
- 43) Walkways and patios provide spaces that don't require watering. Installing these areas can save water and add value to your property.
- 44) Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation than those spraying water into the air.

Water Saving Tips: Bathrooms and Laundry

Bathrooms

Bathroom water use accounts for 75% of water used in the home. These water saving tips will also save you money.

- 45) If the shower fills a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the showerhead with a water-efficient model or install an aeration filter in the showerhead. These changes can save up to 750 gallons of water a month.
- 46) Shortening shower time by one to two minutes can save up to 150 gallons of water per month.
- 47) Showers generally use less water than baths. To compare the difference prepare a bath and note the final water level before you enter the bathtub. The next day plug the drain and take a shower. Exit the tub when you are done and compare the water level of the shower to the bath.
- 48) Upgrade older toilets with water efficient models.
- 49) When running a bath, plug the tub before turning the water on then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.
- 50) Brushing your teeth without the water running saves 25 gallons a month.
- 51) If the toilet flapper doesn't seal completely after flushing, replace it. A leaking flapper can cost from \$50-\$500.00 a year in wasted water. A new flapper is only \$3-\$10.00.
- 52) If a toilet was installed before 1992, reduce the amount of water used for each flush by inserting a displacement device in the tank.
- 53) Turn off the water while you wash your hair to save up to 150 gallons a month.
- 54) Turn off the water while you shave and save up to 300 gallons a month.
- 55) Save water and time by brushing your teeth while in the shower.
- 56) Use towels more than once. Hang them up to dry and use them again rather than throwing them in the wash.
- 57) Keep a bucket in the shower to catch water as it warms up or runs. Use this water to flush toilets or water plants.
- 58) When washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.
- 59) Don't use the toilet to get rid of trash. This wastes water and increases the work load at the wastewater treatment plant.

Laundry

Of total household water use the washing machine, accounts for approximately 14%.

- 60) Run the washing machine only when it is full. This can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- 61) When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.
- 62) Wear your clothes more than once. Of course, the best way to conserve water in the laundry room is to not do laundry! We are all guilty of tossing clothes that could be worn again into the hamper. And everyone knows a teenager that tries something on and tosses it on the floor. Then on laundry day, everything arrives to be washed.

63) Washing dark clothes in cold water saves on water and energy while it helping clothes to keep their colors.

64) When replacing your old washing machine, look for "Energy Star" labeled washing Machines. Energy Star machines use precisely the amount of water needed for the load of clothes you are washing. These machines use less water in general because they rinse clothes with a high-pressure spray, instead of soaking them.

65) Check for leaks on the hose connections for your washing machines.

Water Saving Tips: Kitchen

Approximately 11% of in home water use occurs in the kitchen. Most of the water ends up down the drain but with a little modification to traditional kitchen processes you can save hundreds of gallons of water a year.

66) When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.

67) Repair dripping faucets as soon as possible.

68) Some refrigerators and ice-makers are cooled with wasted flows of water. Consider upgrading with air-cooled appliances for significant water savings.

69) Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap. Use the leftover water for watering indoor or outdoor plants.

70) 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.

71) Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.

72) Teach your children to turn off faucets tightly after each use. Dripping faucets can waste hundreds of gallons of water.

73) Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.

74) Install an instant water heater near your kitchen sink so you don't have to run the water while it heats up. In addition to saving water it will also reduce energy costs.

75) If your dishwasher is new, cut back on rinsing. Newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.

76) Never run your dishwasher without a full load. A full load will save water, energy and detergent.

77) Don't pre-rinse dishes before loading them in the dishwasher. This will save 20 gallons per load.

78) Listen for dripping faucets. Fixing a leak can save 300 gallons a month or more.

- 79) When cooking food items in water use the least amount of water possible and keep the lid on the pan or pot. Use the leftover water as a start to soups, stews or watering plants.
- 80) If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.
- 81) Use your disposal sparingly. Consider composting your food waste with yard waste to create rich, fertile compost for trees and plants.
- 82) Keep a container of water in the refrigerator. Running water from the tap until it cools wastes water.
- 83) Use water-saving aerators on all faucets.
- 84) Designate at least one day a week to eat with plasticware, paper plates and plastic cups. This will cut down on the dishwashing demand.

Water Saving Tips: General

- 85) Check for a suspected water leak in your home by making sure all water is shut off and checking the water meter. If the meter is running you may have a leak. The leak may be a running toilet or damaged pipe beneath the home or in the yard.
- 86) Approximately 50% of the water used in a home is hot water. Providing energy to heat the water is a major drain on utility bills. Cutting down on hot water use will save water and money.
- 87) Monitor water bills and water meters for unusually high use. Higher than usual totals can indicate a water leak, which can cost hundred of dollars a year.
- 88) When cleaning out fish tanks, give the nutrient-rich water to your plants.
- 89) Know where the master water shut-off valve is located at your home. This can save water and prevent damage to the home should a leak occur
- 90) Work aggressively with the local government and school system to encourage, develop and promote water conservation.
- 91) When the kids want to cool off, use a sprinkler in an area where the lawn needs it the most.
- 92) Insulate hot water pipes for more immediate hot water at the faucet and for energy savings.
- 93) Setting cooling systems and water softeners for a minimum number of refills saves water, chemicals and energy costs.
- 94) When replacing a pet's water, don't throw the old water out. Use it to water trees, shrubs or indoor plants.
- 95) When replacing a hot water heater consider a "tankless" heater. Tankless heaters provide instant hot water, saving time, water and upwards of 60% on water heating bills.
- 96) Report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, errant sprinklers, abandoned free-flowing wells, etc.) to the property owner, local authorities or your water agency.

97) Be aware of and follow all water conservation and water shortage rules in effect in Wichita Falls. Good water conservations efforts by everyone benefit the entire community.

98) Encourage employers to promote water conservation in the workplace. See if water conservation can be put into employee orientation and training programs.

99) Encourage businesses to practice and promote water conservation such as only serving water upon request.

100) Get involved in water management issues. Voice your questions and concerns at public meetings conducted by your local, county and state government.