

Water Conservation

Home Residents

What can I do?

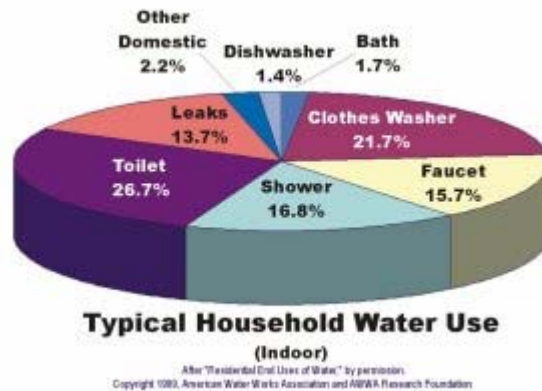
Water conservation is good practice whether or not there is a drought.

Did you know that landscape watering and toilets use the largest amount of water in your home?

During the summer, nearly 40 percent of municipal water is used for outdoor irrigation. During peak summer days, outdoor water consumption can reach as much as 3,000 gallons a day per home.

Here are some things you can do to save water in your yard and around your home:

- **Plant right for your site.** Select plants that grow well in the Northwest environment, including native plants. Your local nursery or garden club can help.
- **Choose pest- and drought-resistant plants.** These plants help reduce water use and the need for pesticides.
- **Set your lawn mower at the right height.** Setting the mower height at about two inches encourages deeper, healthier roots and helps retain moisture.
- **“Grasscycle” – leave the clippings as you mow.** They help retain moisture and provide free fertilizer as they break down.
- **If water won’t penetrate, try aerating.** Aerating (poking holes) helps air and water get into the soil. If a thick layer of stems and surface roots (thatch) has built up, a de-thatching machine can remove that, or aeration will help, too.
- **Build healthy soil with compost.** Rake a thin (1/4-inch) layer of compost into lawns after aerating. On new garden beds, mix in one to two inches of compost before planting.
- **Mulch your landscape.** Spread a one- to three-inch layer of organic mulch like wood chips, bark, leaves or needles around trees and shrubs to conserve water, prevent weeds and build the soil. On flowerbeds and gardens, use compost, leaves or grass clippings as mulch.
- **Use an efficient irrigation system.** Use a soaker hose or drip system on landscape beds to reduce evaporation and runoff. On lawns, run sprinklers in early morning or evening.



- **Water smart.** Water slowly, or start and stop, so water has time to penetrate. Wait to water again until plants or lawn show signs of drooping – over-watering just promotes plant diseases.
- **Plan and design landscapes according to water, light and aesthetic needs.** Group plants that have similar needs for water, sun and soil together in your landscape, then plan irrigation to give each group just what it needs and no more.
- **You can have a beautiful yard and garden without using a lot of water.** Consider saving even more by going for the gold – let your lawn go golden during the summer months.
- **If you have an older home, convert to water-efficient toilets (1.6 gallons per flush), faucets and showerheads (2.5 gallons per minute; up to 75 percent less than conventional faucets and showerheads).** Check with your local utility – some offer free low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, or rebates toward the purchase of water-efficient toilets and washing machines.
- **Take shorter showers.**
- **Don't let the water run when you are shaving, brushing your teeth, or hand washing dishes.** Turn on the tap only when you need it! Additionally, don't use faucets at full pressure.
- **Make sure you have a full load before running your washing machine or dishwasher.**

Try these water-conservation tips and you will not only leave more water in Washington streams for people and wildlife, you'll save money on water bills this summer, too!