

Water Conservation Tips

1. Wash your car at a commercial car wash. Commercial car washes recycle their wash water and use less than 2 gallons per wash. Washing the car in your driveway uses as much as 150 gallons, much of which runs down the street and is lost. Water that does flow into the yard, only saturates a small area.
2. Don't allow the water to run in the sink while you brush your teeth. Turn on the water, wet the toothbrush and then turn off the water until you are finished and ready to rinse. A bathroom sink uses at least 2 gallons of water per minute.
3. Men - Don't allow the water to run in the sink while you shave. Draw a small amount of water in the basin to rinse your razor. This will save both water and energy used to produce the hot water.
4. Keep a water bottle in the refrigerator for cold water to drink. Use this instead of allowing the water to run in the sink until it cools off. A kitchen sink uses at least 2.5 gallons per minute.
5. Use the dishwasher to wash dishes and be sure to run only full loads. A dishwasher uses 14-17 gallons per cycle. Washing dishes in the sink uses considerably more water.
6. Don't use the toilet as a trash can. Each flush requires at least 1.6 gallons of water and may use up to 7.5 gallons. Flushing cigarette butts and Kleenex, for example, down the toilet is a waste of water and could cause significant sewer problems.
7. Check toilet tanks twice each year for leaks. Dye tablets are available for this purpose.
8. Keep all faucet washers in good condition to eliminate leaks. A small leak wastes 15 gallons of water per day.
9. Install a good Ultra Low Flow shower head. Old style shower heads use 6 gallons per minute, whereas a ULF fixture uses 2.5 gallons. The reduced flow will also save energy by reducing hot water use.
10. When changing the water in your aquarium, use the old water to water your plants. It contains phosphorus and nitrogen, which the plants need.
11. Don't water your lawn with a sprinkler in the heat of the day - 25% to 50% of the water you spray into the air will evaporate. Watering during the heat of the day also stresses plants due to temperature changes. Late evening and early morning are the best times to water.

12. Lawns and shrubs should be watered thoroughly once or twice a week, as opposed to shallow watering every day, which causes the plant to suffer during dry conditions.
13. Most lawns in this region require 1" of water each week. If rainfall accounts for ½", supplement with only ½" of additional water. Rain gauges are available at most stores and garden shops and are relatively inexpensive. In lieu of a rain gauge, use a tin can to catch rainwater or sprinkler water and measure the depth with a ruler.
14. Soaker hoses are better for watering shrubs since they can be placed at the base of the plant to thoroughly water the root system. Less water is lost due to evaporation, since it is not sprayed into the air.
15. Don't use a sprinkler to water on windy days. Wind often blows the water onto streets or sidewalks, and evaporation is greater on windy days.
16. Use a timer on the sprinkler. Inexpensive timers are available for use on hose sprinkler systems.
17. If you have an underground irrigation system which uses an automatic timer, install a moisture sensor which will keep the sprinkler from operating when it is raining or otherwise not needed.
18. Don't use the hose to "sweep" the driveway or sidewalk. A broom or blower works just as well and doesn't waste water.
19. A minimum of 3" of organic mulch in gardens and around plants slows water loss from the soil to evaporation.
20. Wash full loads of clothes or adjust the water level in the washer each time it is used. Most full wash cycles require 45 gallons of water.
21. In the morning when you turn on the hot water, catch the first drawn water to use for plants.
22. Get advice on xeriscaping your landscape. The Cooperative Extension Service has free materials on this concept and can direct you to other organizations for assistance.
23. Take a home gardener's conservation workshop at a local home improvement store.

