

# Conserving water at home, follow these easy tips

As the supply of clean water diminishes, it becomes increasingly important for each family to practice smart water conservation. Using less water saves energy and money, helps mitigate environmental degradation and results in less need for chemicals to process dirty water and sewage. Cutting back on water also reduces air pollution emitted from the burning of fossil fuel, which is used to heat water. The following simple steps will help conserve these precious resources.

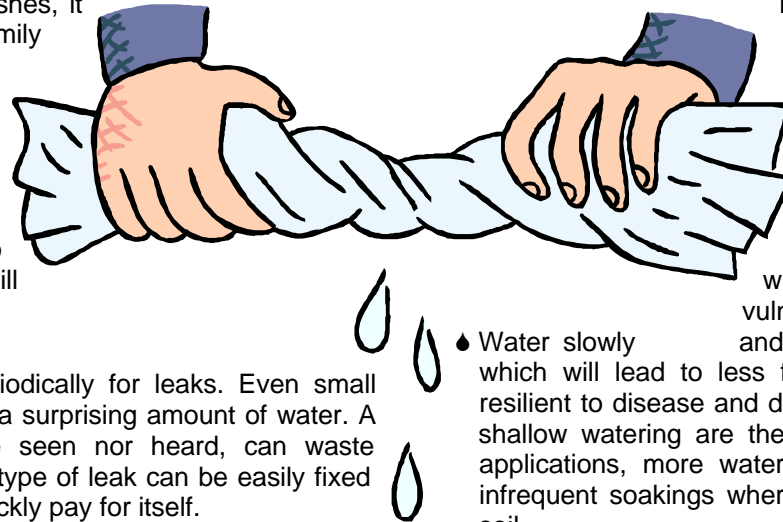
## Inside

- ◆ Check pipes, faucets and toilets periodically for leaks. Even small leaks and dripping faucets can waste a surprising amount of water. A leaking toilet, which can neither be seen nor heard, can waste thousands of gallons per month. This type of leak can be easily fixed with inexpensive hardware that will quickly pay for itself.
- ◆ Keep a bottle of cold water in the refrigerator so that water is not wasted waiting for tap water to cool for drinking.
- ◆ Instead of leaving the faucet running, use short bursts of water or partially fill the sink when cleaning vegetables and other foods, brushing teeth or shaving.
- ◆ Wait until washing machines and dishwashers are full before running them. Washing machines use 30 to 35 gallons while dishwashers use 25 to 30 gallons per load.
- ◆ Use trash cans more and toilets and garbage disposals less. Place garbage, tissues, and cigarettes in the trash instead of flushing them down the toilet, which uses five to seven gallons of water.
- ◆ Install gadgets to faucets, showerheads, and toilets that can drastically cut water usage. Most are inexpensive and simple to install. These energy and water savers can be purchased at most home centers and hardware stores. The Project also offers some watersaving items for purchase. Members receive a discount. Contact the project for more information.

## Outside

Watering efficiently will not only save time, money and effort, it may actually increase the beauty and appeal of the lawn or garden.

- ◆ Water should only be applied when the lawn or garden shows signs that it needs it. Lawns that get watered when the root zone is still moist release large quantities of water in the form of evaporation and runoff.



In this situation of low efficiency, watering is not needed.

- ◆ When the area does need to be watered, it is best to water in the morning when water loss from evaporation is at a minimum. Times of low wind are also ideal. When watering in the evening, stop a half hour before dusk so the vegetation has a chance to dry. Grass stays wet longer at night when evaporation rates are low, leaving it more vulnerable to disease.
- ◆ Water slowly and deeply. This will help develop deep roots, which will lead to less frequent watering and plants that are more resilient to disease and drought. Plants that seem to benefit most from shallow watering are the undesirable ones – weeds. During shallow applications, more water is lost to surface evaporation than during infrequent soakings where much of the water is retained deep in the soil.
- ◆ Plants can absorb only so much water. Over watering wastes water and can injure certain plants. Place several containers with 1-inch marks under the sprinkler to help gauge how much water the lawn or garden is receiving.
- ◆ Use organic matter to slow the evaporation process, allowing the soil to retain more moisture. By applying a layer of straw to a garden, watering will be needed less frequently and weed germination will be hindered. A good mulching lawn mower serves the same purpose for lawns.
- ◆ Sprinklers that produce large drops of water are better for watering lawns than those that emit a fine mist and yield excessive amounts of evaporation.
- ◆ Trees, wood fences and other windbreaks help slow the velocity of the wind and decrease the rate of evaporation. This helps to retain water in the soil longer for vegetation uptake, requiring less frequent watering.
- ◆ Plant grass species that are better adapted to dry conditions. Buffalo grass and Bermuda grass may be ideal for individuals desiring a low-maintenance lawn. The green season for these varieties is relatively short, as is the watering season.
- ◆ Only water the areas that need it. Watering impervious surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks does little good for the lawn or the water bill.
- ◆ When washing cars at home, use a bucket instead of a running hose. Wash the car on the lawn instead of the driveway so the soil can absorb the water and filter the soapy chemicals.

***Strive to make every drop of water count!***