

Water Conservation Tips for the Home

Bathroom:

- Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth — wet your toothbrush, turn off the water, brush, and then turn on the water to rinse.
- Take shorter showers and turn off the water while you scrub. Save your shower water in the tub and use it to pour-flush toilets. Do not save this water longer than 24 hours.
- Put a clean bucket in the shower and save the “warm-up” water you run while waiting for the hot water. This clean water can be used for bathing, watering garden plants, and supplementing washing machine water.
- The water that fills your toilet tank is actually clean water. Use it sparingly for toilet flushing. You can use “grey water” such as your bath water to flush instead of using clean water. Use a bucket to pour the grey water into the toilet bowl, not the tank. Do not save grey water longer than 24 hours.
- Replace your old toilet with a more efficient model that uses less water per flush.
- Displace the water in the toilet tank with a container such as a plastic water bottle or jar filled with water. Be sure it does not interfere with the operation of the flush or fill mechanisms.
- Repair any leaky faucets or pipes.
- Install faucet aerators and low flow shower heads to increase velocity and decrease the amount of water used.
- Reduce the number of flushes. Some families choose this motto: “If it’s yellow, let it mellow. If it’s brown, flush it down.”

Kitchen:

- Running a full dishwasher actually uses less water than doing the same number of dishes by hand.
- If you wash dishes by hand, do not let the faucet run. Fill one tub with soapy water for washing and one for rinse water. The used wash water can be used for landscape plants and to pour-flush toilets. Save rinse water to irrigate garden plants.
- Save water used to rinse vegetables and fruit. This can be used to water garden plants and pour-flush toilets.
- Save cooking water from vegetables. Cool before using to water garden plants.
- Never dump water or ice from drinking glasses or coolers down the drain. Let the ice melt and add it to a garden or houseplant.
- Do not use the garbage disposal. Compost table scraps instead.
- Repair any leaky faucets or pipes.
- Install faucet aerators to increase velocity and decrease amount of water used.

Laundry:

- Wear your clothes and use towels multiple times before washing.
- Wash only full loads. Using cold water also will save energy.
- Reuse condensed water from the air conditioner or dehumidifier to supplement wash water. This water can also be used to irrigate houseplants or to pour flush toilets.
- Invest in a clothesline; air drying also saves energy costs.

Outdoor:

- Invest in at least one rain barrel for each downspout on your home. In Iowa, you can collect hundreds of gallons of water to be used for garden and landscape plants. This water is free and conserves drinking water.
- Irrigate only food-bearing plants and newly planted trees and shrubs.
- Water outdoor plants at the roots only.
- Mulch your garden plants after watering by covering the soil with newspaper, cardboard, shredded paper or straw. This will reduce evaporation and conserve irrigation water.
- Let the lawn go dormant. It will come back to life when there is sufficient moisture.
- Consider replacing turf with native plantings and groundcovers. The deep roots of native plants offer drought resilience, can prevent erosion (when it does rain) and build nutrients in the soil. There are many drought-tolerant groundcovers that conserve soil moisture and will reduce your future yard maintenance and expenses.
- Use a broom to sweep debris off of driveways and sidewalks instead of using the hose.
- If you must wash your car, park it on the lawn, not the driveway. Fill a bucket with sudsy water. Turn off the hose while you scrub. Turn it on to rinse. Or look for a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- Do not fill swimming pools.

For more information on water conservation and grey water usage, go to:

http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/water/water_conservation.html

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cfiv/homeowners/110812.html>

http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_m/m-106.pdf

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06702.pdf>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/ae/AE45300.pdf>

http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/pdf/WW/publications/pipline/PL_WI02.pdf

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<http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/isuecofamily>