

## Water Conservation Tips

Water conservation is not only good environmental policy; it is also sound economic policy. The water you receive at your home, whether it is to your kitchen faucet or to your irrigation system, has been filtered, treated, and disinfected before distribution. This makes watering your lawn an expensive proposition. While your landscaping in terms of trees, shrubs and flowers need water, grass will go dormant during a drought and return to normal when regular rainfall returns.

Because of this, we are offering a number of tips to conserve water, both indoors and out. These will help to save you money and protect the water system.



### Outdoors

- ◆ **Don't overwater your lawn.** Grass will go dormant during a drought and return to normal when rain returns. If you must water your grass (new sod for example), do it early in the morning. Watering at mid-day causes evaporation loss and watering at night can lead to diseases. Don't water when it's windy or raining. Adjust hose attachments and sprinkler heads to use large drops instead of fine spray, which evaporates more easily.
- ◆ **Adjust your sprinklers** to avoid watering pavement and other things that don't grow.
- ◆ **Drip irrigation or soaker hoses** are best to use on flowers, shrubs, vegetable gardens and trees. If you must use a hose, install a shutoff nozzle to minimize unnecessary water use. Homeowners who water with a handheld hose can use one-third less water outdoors than those who use automatic sprinklers.
- ◆ **Use a rain gauge** or rain sensor to determine



### Indoors

- ◆ **Repair all leaks.** Leaks can account for as much as 20% of an average household's water use.
  - ◆ Even the smallest drip can add up to a significant loss of water.
  - ◆ A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons per day.
  - ◆ Detect an in-house leak by reading your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak.
  - ◆ Detect a toilet leak by adding a few drops of water coloring to the water in the tank. If coloring shows up in the bowl, without flushing, a leak is present. You can usually repair leaking fixtures easily and inexpensively with kits

the optimum amount of water needed for your lawn and garden. Grass needs only an inch of water a week to stay green in dry weather, and only an inch a month to stay alive.

- ◆ **Mulch** around flowers, shrubs, trees and garden plants to a depth of 2 to 3 inches to retain soil moisture.
- ◆ **Xeriscape**-use native plants in your landscaping-as they are best suited for our climate. See the Ohio State University Extension Service web site (click [here](#)) for information on drought-resistant plants for Ohio's climate.
- ◆ **Over fertilizing** can require more water. Slow-release organic fertilizers that ensure slow but steady growth work best. If you can get by without any fertilizer, that's even better.
- ◆ **Cut your grass high** (3 inches) and leave the clippings. The natural mulch retains moisture and acts as a fertilizer. In addition, longer grass means less evaporation and will encourage roots to grow deeper, leaving your lawn more drought tolerant. Choose more drought tolerant grass seed.
- ◆ **Direct downspouts** and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect and use for your garden.
- ◆ **Remember to weed** your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light and water.
- ◆ **Washing a car** with a running hose can require 120-160 gallons of water. Using a bucket, sponge and hose with a spray nozzle can reduce the wash water required by 75 %. Or use a car wash that recycles water.
- ◆ **Wash your car** or bathe your pet outdoors in

available at a hardware store.

- ◆ **Don't let the water run.**

- ◆ Fill up a jug and keep it in the refrigerator rather than letting the water run to get cold.

- ◆ Fill the sink rather than letting the water run when preparing fresh vegetables and fruits, shaving, or washing.

- ◆ Buy a showerhead with a turn-off valve so you don't have to let the water run while you soap up.

- ◆ **Don't use the toilet as a trash can.**

Flushing such items as tissues, cigarettes and spiders wastes several gallons of water.

- ◆ **Turn off the lights when you leave a room.**

- ◆ Almost 8 of every 10 gallons of water withdrawn in Ohio are used in the electricity generation process. So conserving electricity also conserves water.

- ◆ **Use water-conserving fixtures.**

- ◆ Toilets are the largest indoor water user for most Ohioans. Older toilets use 5-7 gallons for each flush, but the new low consumption toilets use fewer than 2 gallons.

- ◆ Clothes washers and dishwashers should be full, or use

an area in need of water.

- ◆ **When cleaning a porch**, sidewalk or driveway, using a broom or rake instead of water washing.
- ◆ **If you own a pool**, use a pool cover when its not in use. This reduces evaporation and keeps out unwanted items such as leaves and bugs. Check equipment on a regular basis for leaks.
- ◆ **Consider buying** a pool filter that uses less water during filter cleaning.
- ◆ **Avoid toys** that need a constant stream of water.
- ◆ **Don't install** fountains or other water ornaments unless they use recycled water.

the load size function available on newer models. When its time to purchase a new appliance, make water efficiency a top consideration.

◆ Showers and bathtubs should also be upgraded to more efficient units. Keeping shower time to less than five minutes conserves water and energy. Tub bathing is usually more efficient than showering, especially if the tub is only filled halfway.

◆ Sinks can benefit from low-flow aerators and from low flow faucets. Consider composting instead of using a garbage disposal.