OUTDOOR TIPS

One inch of water per week in the summer will keep most Texas grasses healthy. To determine how long you should run your sprinklers, place straight-edged cans at different distances away from the sprinkler and time how long it takes to fill an average of 1 inch of water in each can.

Don't abuse the benefits of an automatic sprinkler system by over-watering. Set it to provide thorough but infrequent watering. Check sprinkler heads regularly to make sure they are working properly. Install rain shut-off devices and adjust sprinklers to eliminate coverage on pavement.

Prevent evaporation of water. Water lawns early in the morning or in the evening during the hotter summer months. Never water on windy days. Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees, or shrubs and use low-angle sprinklers for lawns. Cover pools and spas. This can save the equivalent of your pool volume each year!

Plant water-efficient, well-adapted, and/or native shrubs, trees, and grasses. Choose plants that are drought and heat tolerant and can survive the minimum winter temperatures in your area. In odd-shaped areas, use drought-tolerant groundcover instead of grass. Many cities provide lists of water-efficient plants.

Harvest the rain. Buy a rain barrel or a cistern and collect the water from your gutters to water your plants.

Use your water efficiently. Don't waste water by cleaning patios or sidewalks with it; use a broom. For plants that need more water, use a hose or watering can to give them additional water.

Keep grass 3 inches tall during the summer and don't cut more than one-third of its length at one time. Don't scalp lawns when mowing during hot weather. Taller grass holds moisture better. Leave lawn clippings on the lawn instead of bagging.

Use lots of mulch around your shrubs and trees. It will retain moisture, reduce run-off, moderate soil temperatures, and help with weed control.

Don't over-fertilize! Get a soil kit to determine what nutrients your soil needs. If you apply fertilizer only in the spring and fall, your grass will be healthy, use less water, and require less mowing.

Use a car wash that recycles water. If you are washing your car at home, use a bucket of soapy water and a hose nozzle that shuts off the water while you scrub.

Printed on recycled-content paper

Texas Water Development Board

www.twdb.state.tx.us

P.O. Box 13231
Austin, Texas 78711-3231

WATER IQ®

www.wateriq.org

Visit the following Web site for additional information.

www.epa.gov/watersense

07/10

WATER CONSERVING TIPS

USING WATER MORE EFFICIENTLY will not only save money but, more importantly, will also help protect the quality of life of future Texans.

With the vastness of Texas, it's easy to forget two important facts about our state: we are subject to frequent droughts, and our population is projected to double in the next 50 years. The cost of developing new or additional supplies in that same time period is estimated to be $30.7 billion.

To ensure that we have enough cost-effective water for current and future Texans, we need to reduce the amount of water we waste.

POSSIBLE WATER SAVINGS

- High-efficiency toilets, water-efficient washing machines, rainwater harvesting systems, and water-efficient landscaping can all help reduce water use.
- Water-efficient showerheads and aerators for faucets can significantly reduce the amount of water you use. In fact, installing a water-efficient showerhead is one of the most effective water-saving steps you can take inside your house.
- Leaky faucets and toilets can waste thousands of gallons of water monthly, and they are inexpensive to fix. A few small changes in your water use habits can make a huge difference in water savings.
- In the summer, outdoor water use can account for 50 percent or more of total water use. With proper management, you can have a beautiful, healthy landscape and reduce your water use significantly. This can amount to hundreds of dollars in savings a year in water and often wastewater costs.

INDOOR TIPS

Bathroom

- Replace your showerhead with a water-efficient model.
- Get in the shower as soon as the water becomes warm enough.
- Take short showers.
- Take a shower instead of a bath. A shower with a water-efficient showerhead often uses less water than a bath.
- Reduce the level of water used in a bathtub by 1 or 2 inches if a shower is not available.
- Turn off the water while you are shaving. Fill the sink with hot water instead of letting the water run continuously.
- Replace your old toilet with a high-efficiency toilet that uses 1.3 gallons per flush.
- Test toilets for leaks. Once in awhile, take the top off of your toilet tank and watch it flush. Do you notice any leaks? Yes? Replace the flapper or rubber washer. Don't forget about those less obvious leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring or a dye tablet to the water in the tank, but do not flush the toilet. If the coloring appears in the bowl within a few minutes, the toilet has a leak that needs to be repaired.
- Never use the toilet to dispose of trash.
- Don't waste water when brushing your teeth or washing your hands. Shut off the water until it's time to rinse.

Kitchen

- Run the dishwasher only when full. This practice will save water, energy, detergent, and money. If your dishes are not very dirty, use the short wash cycle. You can spend less money on water and energy by installing a high-efficiency dishwasher
- Install faucet aerators. You'll never notice the difference, and you'll cut your sink water consumption in half! Also, don't ignore leaky faucets; they waste lots of water.
- Keep a container of water in the refrigerator. It will be refreshingly cool and won't waste water.
- Dry scrape dishes instead of rinsing. Your dishwasher will take care of the rest.
- Use garbage disposals sparingly. They can waste water unnecessarily.
- Soak pans rather than scrubbing them while the water is running.
- Rinse your vegetables in a pan of cold water; it doesn't take gallons of water to get the dirt off.

Laundry room

- Conventional washing machines use 32 to 59 gallons of water per load.
- Wash only full loads.
- Use the lowest water level setting on the washing machine for light or partial loads whenever possible.
- Use cold water as often as possible to save energy and conserve hot water for uses that cold water cannot serve.

Additional tips

- Don't ignore leaky faucets; they are usually easy and inexpensive to repair. Turn off the valve under the sink until you get around to repairing the leak. A slow drip can waste as much as 170 gallons of water each day and will add to the water bill.
- Know where your master water shut-off valve is in case a pipe bursts. Insulate hot water pipes. You won't waste water waiting for it to get hot, and you will save energy too.
- Install water-softening systems only when necessary, and if you have one, save water and salt by running the minimum amount of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness.
- Replace water-to-air heat pumps and air conditioners with air-to-air if you are purchasing new units. They are just as efficient and do not waste water.
- Find other uses for water rather than letting it go down the drain, such as watering house plants with fish tank water.