



Take Action! Conserve Water

Suggested below are a number of actions you can take to conserve water. They are in no particular order – focus initially on those that are easiest for you to accomplish. Check off each as you complete it or incorporate it into your land-care routines. Set a target date for accomplishing all of the recommended activities. Explore the Resources and Links we've provided for further guidance.

- WATER PRUDENTLY** - only when absolutely necessary and in the morning, when temperatures are cooler, to minimize evaporation. Spot-water problem areas rather than watering your entire lawn and garden.
- MULCH** around plants for water retention, weed prevention, and to prevent soil erosion. Organic mulches such as compost, wood chips, straw, and cocoa and buckwheat hulls, also replenish the soil as they decay.
- ADD ORGANIC MATTER** such as compost or peat moss to your soil to improve its ability to retain water.
- SWEEP, rather than hose** down, sidewalks, driveways, and other impervious surfaces.
- INSTALL a drip irrigation system or soaker hoses** for trees, shrubs, and flowers. Watering at the roots is more efficient than overhead watering such as with a sprinkler or hose. If you do use sprinklers, direct them so that water reaches only your lawn and garden, not the driveway or sidewalk. Shut off the timer of your sprinkler system.
- ASSESS your plant collection.** Remove and discard those exotic plants that demand heavy watering. Transplant remaining plants into groups with similar water needs.
- PLANT native species**, which have evolved under local conditions and often require less water than exotic plants from foreign climates. Choose plants that are drought-tolerant and plant them in the appropriate soil and light conditions. Explore ways to incorporate native plants into your landscape. Start by replacing one or two exotic water guzzlers with native species.
- MINIMIZE lawn** area. Lawns account for a large percentage of outdoor water use. Shrink the size of the lawn by planting native shrubs, trees, and groundcovers. Initiate the effort by expanding a garden border.
- MOW HIGHER** - longer grass holds soil moisture better than a shorter lawn. Resist the urge to mow at your usual length and wait until it reaches a height of at least three inches.

- ☐ **USE RAINWATER to your advantage.** Capture it in rain barrels or rain gardens. Direct runoff toward plantings that thrive in wet soil. Place a container under your gutter to begin the process. If mosquitoes are a problem, be sure to cover the container with fine-mesh screening.

RESOURCES/LINKS

Water Use it Wisely

100 Water-saving tips for each region of the U.S. and links to state water authorities

<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/regions/100tips/index.html>

H2Ouse

A web-based project of the California Urban Water Conservation Council and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offering tips for water conservation in all parts of the house. Includes information on rain collection, greywater use, irrigation systems, and much more.

<http://www.h2ouse.org>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Backyard Conservation Tip Sheet: Water Conservation in the Yard

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/watrcons.html>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Backyard Conservation Tip Sheet: Marvelous Mulches

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/mrvmulch.html>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Water Use Efficiency Program

Downloadable PDF files with valuable information on water efficiency.

<http://www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/index.htm>

American Water Works Association, Consumer Water Center

Conservation Resources: Landscaping and Xeriscaping

Tips on landscaping and xeriscaping to conserve water

<http://www.awwa.org/advocacy/learn/consERVE/RESOURCES/LANDSCAPING%20AND%20XERISCAPE.CFM>

North American Native Plants Society

Lists native plant organizations by state that can assist with the planning, planting and plant resources for a native garden.

<http://www.nanps.org/associations/index.shtml>

Audubon Magazine, September 2003

Good to the Last Drop by Janet Marinelli

Article introduces rain garden concept to utilize accumulated surface water following a rain.

<http://magazine.audubon.org/backyard/backyard0309.html#raingarden>