

## **Going Green Tips:**

### **Saving Water Every Day:**

#### **Conserving Water inside your home**

- Be alert to faucet and toilet leaks throughout the house. Check and repair them as quickly as possible. A few simple repairs may reduce household water use by 10 percent or more.
- Check for toilet leaks. Put a little food coloring into the tank. If the color trickles into the bowl, there is a leak and repairs are needed – usually as easy as replacing the flapper.
- When you leave home for a trip, turn off the water, so that no one can accidentally turn on an outside faucet or water line burst. Also turn off the hot water heater.
- If you use a home water softener, check how often it backwashes. It uses approximately 80 gallons of water for regeneration. A weekly cycling is usually more than enough for a family of four. A metered softener regenerates only when needed. [waterpurification.pentair.com/en-us/product/autotrol/255/](http://waterpurification.pentair.com/en-us/product/autotrol/255/)
- Look at water requirements when you buy new appliances like a dishwasher or washing machine.
- Teach children water-saving techniques.
- Take short showers, not baths. Limit showers to 5 minutes or less.
- Install flow restrictors on individual water fixtures like shower head and faucets. They automatically reduce flow and aerate the water.
- Install water-saving toilets like the Gerber Viper [www.gerberonline.com/default.aspx](http://www.gerberonline.com/default.aspx)
- As you wait for shower water to heat up, collect the cold water in a bucket for watering plants

#### **Cooking & Drinking Water**

- Use tight-fitting lids on pans to keep water from boiling away faster.
- Cook food in as little water as possible. Doing so also prevents loss of nutrient value.
- Select the proper size pans for cooking. Large pans require more cooking water.
- Serve drinking water only if someone requests it.
- For drinking, keep a covered bottle of water in the refrigerator so you won't have to let the water run to get cold.
- Use a small pan of water to wash, peel or clean vegetables rather than letting the water run.
- Hand wash cooking utensils, pans and serving dishes that take up a lot dishwasher space. Wash them as soon as possible to prevent food particles from getting hard and becoming more difficult to remove.
- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher.
- Scrape/wipe dishes rather than rinsing if they are to be washed immediately in the dishwasher.
- When hand washing dishes, use a pan of soap water for washing and one of hot water for rinsing. Doing so uses less water than a running faucet.
- While waiting for faucet water to warm, catch water and use it for other parts of the meal preparation (cleaning vegetables, cooking liquid, hand dish washing, etc.), or to water plants.
- Use rinse water after it has cooled to water outdoor plants.

#### **Garden and Lawn**

- When planting a garden, group vegetables needing more water so you can apply water most efficiently.
- Mulch shrubs and small trees to retain moisture in the soil for a longer time. Spread leaves, pine straw or small pieces of bark on the ground around plants.
- Pull out weeds to eliminate competition for water.
- When building or remodeling, plan your landscape and garden to minimize water needs.
- Water thoroughly but less frequently. Doing so promotes a deeper grass root system to withstand dry weather better.
- Talk with your local garden center about the most effective irrigation systems and devices. "Trickle" or "drip" techniques use 25 to 50 percent less water than standard hoses or sprinklers.
- Be alert to water waste when you see it running down the driveway into the street or storm drain.
- Water your lawn and garden between 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. to avoid sun evaporation. Don't water when it is windy and during the heat of the day. Set an alarm to remind you to move or turn off the water.
- Check hoses, faucets and water devices periodically for leaks and malfunctions which can waste large amounts of water.

- Water brown spots separately so that you do not water areas not needing as much water.
- During periods of limited rainfall reduce the amount of fertilizer applied to avoid water-demanding new growth.
- When you plant new grass, try a variety that withstands dry weather.

### **Reducing Lawn Maintenance**

If you find that your lawn dries out quickly and needs more frequent watering than other lawns in your neighborhood, there are ways to minimize waterings.

1. Keeping your grass relatively tall will help the plants reduce moisture evaporation by shading the soil.
2. If you choose native grasses or those well adapted to your area when seeding, they will need less watering. For example, Blue grass is a guzzler; Buffalograss is not.
3. Don't use chemicals. Organic lawns require less watering than chemically treated lawns.
4. Use a sharp mower blade to make cleaner cuts. Cleanly cut lawns look greener and cause less evaporation than raggedly cut lawns.
5. Do not over fertilize.
6. Allow your lawn to temporarily brown out, or go dormant, when drought conditions persist. Usually this will not hurt a healthy, established lawn because the roots continue to live and are ready to send forth new shoots when conditions improve. There may be times during the year when it's just not worth trying to keep your lawn green (but continue to water lawns less than a year old through dry spells.)