

50 Tips for Winning the Water War and Having Fun While Saving \$!



Water Conservation Workshop

**Presented by DeKalb County
Green Commission**



Lawn/Outdoors

1. Collect water from your roof to water your garden.
2. Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the sidewalk, or street.
3. Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.
4. Water your lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.
5. Don't water your lawn on windy days when the water blows away or evaporates.
6. Water your plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.
7. Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds soil moisture better than if it is closely clipped.
8. Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed.
9. Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
10. Mulch! Save hundreds of gallons a year by using organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation.
11. Let your lawn go dormant during the summer. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three weeks or less if it rains.
12. Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid overwatering some while under-watering others. This is called "Hydrozoning".
13. Plant plants which are native to your location that don't require extra watering.
14. Weed your garden because weeds take the water away from your other plants
15. Install covers on pools and spas to prevent water from evaporating
16. Walkways and patios provide space that doesn't ever need to be watered. These useful "rooms" can also add value to your property.
17. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.
18. Winterize outdoor spigots when temperatures dip below freezing to prevent pipes from leaking or bursting.
19. When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.
20. Take the pets outside to be bathed—pick a dry spot in the lawn to wash them.
21. Learn the name and location of your watershed and stay educated about the potential threats to your water source.

Household

22. A dripping faucet can waste 20 gallons of water a day. A leaking toilet can use 90,000 gallons of water in a month. Get out the wrench and change the washers on your sinks and showers, or get new washer-less faucets. Keeping your existing equipment well maintained is probably the easiest and cheapest way to start saving water.
23. Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
24. Washing dark clothes in cold water saves both on water and energy while it helps your clothes to keep their colors.
25. Dispose of hazardous materials properly! One quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water!
26. Stop throwing away batteries. The mercury in old batteries will eventually leak out and poison the water it runs into.
27. Insulate hot water pipes for more immediate hot water at the faucet and for energy savings.
28. If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.
29. Turn down your water heater when you are going on a long trip.

Kitchen

30. Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
31. For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.
32. Scrape the food on your dishes into the garbage instead of using water to rinse it down the disposal.
33. Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator or microwave for water efficiency and food safety.
34. Install an instant water heater near your kitchen sink so you don't have to run the water while it heats up. This also reduces energy costs.
35. Avoid rinsing dishes before placing them in the dishwasher; just remove large particles of food. (Most dishwashers can clean soiled dishes very well, so dishes do not have to be rinsed before washing)
36. When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
37. Clean vegetables in a pan filled with water rather than running water from the tap.
38. Save the water from steaming or boiling vegetables for houseplants, vegetable broth for soup or stir fry liquid.

Bathroom

39. Check toilet for leaks. Put dye tablets or food coloring into the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there's a leak that should be repaired. Saves 400 gallons a month.
40. Install ultra-low-flush toilets to reduce the amount of water used in each flush.
41. Fill a gallon plastic bottle with water and place it in your toilet tank. It will take up the same space as the water usually does, but in a year, it will keep 5,000 gallons of water from going down the drain.
42. If the toilet handle frequently sticks in the flush position letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.
43. Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects, and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
44. Keep a bucket in the shower to catch water as it warms up or runs. Use this water to flush toilets or water plants.
45. To save water and time, consider washing your face or brushing your teeth while in the shower.
46. When taking a bath, start filling the tub with the drain already plugged instead of waiting first for the water to get warm. Adjust the temperature as the tub begins to fill.
47. Get a small sand timer that lasts about 3 minutes and bring it in the shower. Most people can have a shower in six minutes.
48. Install a water-saving shower head. In addition to the water it saves, it also saves the fuel that would have been used to heat up the extra hot water. And that reduces pollution.
49. Avoid letting the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving.
50. Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year. This adds to the cost of water and sewer utilities and adds to your water bill.