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SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

12 Simple Ways to Save Water

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Saving Water Outdoors

More than half of residential water use occurs outdoors. Watering wisely outside the home promotes healthier lawns and landscapes and will save some folks at least 50 percent of the water they use outdoors.

1 Water your lawn like a winner

Watering your lawn in the early morning minimizes evaporation and waste. Lawns only need watering once every two to three days in the summer and once every seven to 10 days in the winter. A hearty rain can eliminate the need for watering for up to 10 days in the winter.

2 Make tuna cans do double duty

Lawns only need about one-half to three-quarters of an inch of water at a time. To determine how long it takes your irrigation system to put out half an inch of water, place tuna cans around the yard and measure the water collected in half an hour. Place a dozen cans around your yard to test for even distribution of water.

3 Sprinkle your yard with care

Install water-efficient sprinklers and a rain sensor switch to override your system when it rains. Check timing device settings regularly. Install low-volume soaker hoses or drip irrigation systems for planting beds with shrubs and flowers. Make sure you are watering your plants and not the street or driveway.

4 Celebrate your surroundings

Landscape with water thrifty ornamental grasses, plants and trees. Group plants together based on similar water needs. Mulch to retain moisture and reduce weeds.

Saving Water Indoors

Fixing leaks and replacing old plumbing fixtures with water-saving ones could save a family of four 30,000 gallons of water each year.

5 Avoid buzz cuts and backaches

Raising your lawn mower blade to its highest setting encourages grass roots to grow deeper and grass blades to hold moisture longer than with a closely clipped lawn. Cut off no more than one-third of a blade of grass at a time. Apply fertilizers sparingly and use fertilizers that contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.

6 Buy a nozzle for the nose of your hose

Place a self-canceling shut-off nozzle on your hose to control the flow of water so you only use what you need. Remember to turn the water off at the faucet to prevent leaks.

7 Save time and save water

If you don't have an automatic timer on your sprinkler, use a kitchen timer to remind you to turn off the water. Left unattended, a garden hose can waste as much as 600 gallons of water in just one hour.

8 Meet your water meter

Find out if you have a leak in your home by reading your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the readings are different, you have a leak. If you have a well, listen to see if the pump kicks on and off while the water is not in use. If it does, you have a leak.

9 Make a faucet washer a water saver

Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can waste 20 gallons of water each day. A steady stream of water the size of a pencil can waste from 7,200 to 13,000 gallons of water each day (depending upon water pressure).

10 Use food coloring to save water

Detect toilet leaks by removing the lid from the toilet tank, remove any colored cleaning agents, flush to clear water in the bowl, then add a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If the tank is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. To avoid staining the bowl, flush as soon as the test is complete. A leaky tank can waste 200 gallons of water each day. Replace worn, corroded or bent parts. Don't use the toilet as a waste basket.

11 Delay household chores

Run automatic dishwashers only when fully loaded. Set clothes washers to the appropriate water level for the size of load you are washing.

12 Shower yourself with savings

By timing your showers to keep them under five minutes and installing ultra low-flow showerheads, you can save water. The older the showerhead, the more water it uses. New showerheads deliver 2.5 gallons of water per minute. Older fixtures can deliver as high as nine gallons per minute.

Florida's Water

It's Worth Saving

For more information on how you can conserve water, visit us online at *sfwmd.gov* or call (800) 662-8876.