



# BRIGHT IDEAS FOR WATER AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

from

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## **WHY SAVE WATER?**

Texas' population is growing. By the year 2040, twice as many people will be competing for the same amount of water we have now. This growing demand places an increasing strain on our current water supplies. Many wells, aquifers, and reservoirs are already experiencing the result of this increased demand for water.

Texans already spend about \$1 billion each year to build new water and wastewater treatment facilities. No matter how much money is spent, some areas of the state will experience fresh water shortages in the future unless we start using water more efficiently. Water conservation is vital if we are to have adequate water supplies. We must begin conserving precious water resources now.

## **HOW TO SAVE WATER INSIDE THE HOME**

### **Kitchen**

*The kitchen uses about 8 percent of all water in the home.*

Wait until you have a full load before running the dishwasher.

Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator, instead of running tap water until it is cold. In the summertime, keep a thermos jug of ice water on the counter. This saves water and energy, because you are not opening and closing the refrigerator door unnecessarily.

Fill a dishpan to rinse pots and pans, instead of letting the faucet run.

Save scraps for the garbage disposal and process at one time.

When cleaning vegetables, use a small pan of water to rinse them instead of running the faucet.

When cooking vegetables, boil in just a small amount of water. Better still, use a microwave if one is available.

## **Bathroom**

*The Bathroom uses about 75% of all water in the home.*

Take a short shower (5 minutes or less), or a shallow bath. Showers use less water than filling the tub.

Install a special low-flow shower head.

Shampoo your hair while showering -- it takes less water than shampooing under a faucet.

When brushing teeth or washing hands, turn the water off until it is time to rinse.

A tip for men: when shaving, fill the sink with hot water to rinse your razor, and only turn on the faucet for the final rinse.

Test toilets for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring to the water in the toilet tank. If the water in the bowl changes color after a few minutes, the toilet has a "silent leak" that needs to be repaired.

Place a plastic bottle of water (or one of the new 'toilet tummies') in the toilet tank, away from moving parts. This will save water every time you flush. Never use a brick -- it will crumble and damage your toilet.

If you are building a new home, or replacing appliances, buy low-volume toilets and energy saving appliances that use less water and electricity.

## **Laundry**

*The laundry uses about 14 percent of all water in the house.*

Wait until you have a full load before washing clothes. An automatic washer uses 32 to 59 gallons of water per load, whether you wash one item or many!

Check the water level setting – use the lowest setting for the amount of clothes being washed.

Use cold water whenever possible. This saves water, energy, and is better for your clothes. Usually, only very dirty clothes need hot water.

## **OUTSIDE THE HOME**

### **Yard and Landscape Conservation**

*In the summer, lawn watering and other outdoor uses account for 50-80 percent of home water use. Much of this is wasted through poor outdoor water use practices:*

Repair leaky faucets. Be sure the hose connection to the faucet has a rubber washer and is screwed on tightly.

If you have a pool or hot tub, run the filter backwash onto the lawn, rather than down the drain. Empty children's wading pools onto the lawn or the garden.

Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways, patios, and sidewalks.

When washing a car or boat, use a bucket of soapy water for washing, and a hose-end spray gun or nozzle with an automatic shut off for rinsing.

Lawns, flower beds, and ground covers require different amounts of water, and should be watered using the most efficient equipment possible.

#### **Lawns**

*are best watered with sprinklers.*

Use a sprinkler that produces large drops of water. They won't evaporate as quickly as a fine mist. Keep water as close to the ground as possible for maximum conservation.

Position sprinklers and adjust watering systems so that water doesn't run onto streets and driveways.

When watering sloping lawns, place the sprinkler at the top of the slope so that runoff water will be absorbed, rather than wasted.

Water lawns early in the morning or in the evening. Evaporation loss is 60 percent higher during sunny daytime hours.

Don't water on windy days.

Don't over-water lawns. Studies show that most lawns receive twice as much water as they need. Too much water can rot grass roots and cause lawn diseases.

When mowing, don't give your lawn a "crew cut." Keep grass 2-3 inches long to reduce evaporation and root stress. Mow only 1/2" to 3/4" at a time.

Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They act as a "natural" mulch and fertilizer.

The following chart will help you determine how much water your grass requires during the summer:

<b>Grass Species by Region</b>	<b>How Often to Water</b>
Buffalograss (3,4,5)	Every 2-5 weeks
Bermudagrass (6)	Every 7-10 days
Centipede (1)	Every 7-10 days
Zoysia (3,4,5)	Every 7-10 days
Carpetgrass (1,2)	Every 5 days
St. Augustine (1,2,5)	Every 5 days
Tall Fescue (4)	Every 4 days
Bluegrass (1,4)	Every 4 days

**Regions:** 1 - East Texas; 2 - South Texas; 3 - West Texas; 4 - North Texas; 5 - Central Texas; 6 - Statewide.

Shrubs, flower beds and ground covers are watered most efficiently with low volume drip, spray, or soaker hoses.

Mulch all flower beds to conserve moisture. This saves water, and retards weed growth. Avoid using plastic sheeting underneath mulches, since it prevents water from reaching the soil.

Learn about Xeriscape, which uses native and drought-tolerant plants that are more water-efficient.

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