splash!

quick facts on...

50 Ways To Be Water Smart

HOW YOU CAN HELP SAVE FLORIDA'S LIMITED WATER SUPPLY

The South Florida Water Management District *is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.*

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply.

NOTE:

Florida's lifestyle depends on a clean, ample supply of water. You can help conserve this limited resource by using these commonsense tips at home. It's important that we all do our part.

Saving Water Outdoors

1. Use a rain gauge to measure how much water your lawn receives. South Florida lawns typically need only ¾ to 1 inch of water each week.

2. Irrigate no more than once a week in the winter or twice a week in the summer.

3. Turn off sprinklers when it rains. All automatic sprinkler systems installed since 1991 must have a rainfall shut-off device, according to Florida law. The device overrides the sprinkling system when it rains.

4. Use Florida-friendly and drought-tolerant plants in your landscape. These plants do not need as much water as other varieties and are more likely to survive in a dry period.

5. Irrigate during the early morning hours when temperatures and wind speeds are the lowest. This reduces water loss through evaporation.

6. Position sprinklers to put water on your lawn and landscape, not onto paved areas nearby.

7. Install and use timers on all irrigation systems and portable sprinklers to prevent overwatering.

8. Check and maintain sprinkler systems and timing devices so that they operate properly.

9. Install low-flow irrigation systems that apply water directly to plant root zones. This includes drip, bubble and micro-jet systems and soaker hoses.

10. Collect rainwater from rooftop gutters in a rain barrel or cistern. Use the stored water during dry periods.

11. Adjust your mower blade to leave the grass 3 inches high when you cut the lawn. Taller grass encourages deeper root growth, shades the root system and holds soil moisture.

12. Keep the mowing blade sharp to reduce stress on your lawn.

13. Use mulch in plant beds to retain moisture, reduce evaporation and discourage weeds that compete with plants for water.

14. Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. Applying fertilizer increases the need for water. If you use fertilizer, choose one containing 2 percent or less phosphorus.

15. Apply fertilizer using smaller applications rather than a large, single application. Follow instructions on the label. The label's the law.

16. To prevent fertilizer spills, use a tarp under the spreader when filling or emptying it. Sweep any spilled granular fertilizer onto the grass. Never hose it off.

17. Postpone fertilizing when more than 1 inch of rain is expected.

18. Use a broom or leaf blower instead of a hose to clean leaves and other debris off your driveway or sidewalk.

19. Attach to your hose an automatic or self-cancelling nozzle that can adjust water flow from the hose to a fine spray. Always turn water off at the faucet, instead of at the nozzle, to avoid leaks.

20. Check connectors on garden hoses and household appliances, such as dishwashers and clothes washers, to make sure that plastic or rubber washers are in place. Washers prevent water from leaking at the hose connection.

21. Do not leave hoses unattended. More than 600 gallons of water can flow from an open garden hose in one hour.

22. Avoid purchasing recreational toys that require a constant stream of water.

23. Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your own car, park on the grass or other non-paved surface and use a hose with an automatic or self-cancelling nozzle.

24. Avoid installing fountains or other ornamental water features unless they use recycled water. Properly adjust them so that water doesn't fall outside of the catch basin.

In Your Home

25. Repair dripping faucets by replacing the washers inside. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year.

26. Retrofit all household faucets with high-efficiency units that use 1 gallon of water per minute or less.

27. Replace older toilets with low-flow models that use 1.6 gallons of water per flush or less. Older models may use up to 5 gallons of water per flush.

28. Check for toilet leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If it is leaking, colored water will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. Flush the colored water immediately to avoid staining the bowl.

29. Replace or adjust the toilet handle if it frequently sticks in the flush position, letting water run constantly.

30. Install a toilet dam or displacement device, such as a filled 16-ounce plastic water bottle, to reduce the amount of water used for each flush. Be sure that it does not interfere with other parts in the tank or bowl. Other devices are available at hardware and home centers. Do not use a brick.

31. Replace your showerhead with a low-flow version using 2 gallons of water per minute or less. Older showerheads may use up to 5 gallons of water per minute.

32. Take shorter showers. When taking a shower or washing your hair, turn water on to get wet; turn it off before lathering; then turn water back on to rinse off.

33. Catch excess water in the shower with a bucket and use it to irrigate indoor plants.

34. Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only for full loads. Scrape – don't rinse – dishes before loading.

35. Store drinking water in the refrigerator, and heat water on the stove or in a microwave. Don't let water run from the tap to get cold or hot water.

36. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator, or use the defrost setting on your microwave. Don't thaw food under running water.

37. Compost kitchen food waste. Kitchen sink disposals require much more water and energy.

38. Install an instant hot water heater on the kitchen sink and insulate water pipes.

39. Cool your home with an air-to-air system. Newer models are more efficient and use less water than heat pumps and air-conditioning systems.

40. Turn off the faucet after wetting a toothbrush, razor or washcloth. Turn the faucet back on when you are ready to rinse.

41. Install water softening systems only when necessary. Turn softeners off when you leave for vacations.

42. Check and properly maintain any well pumps. A well pump has a leak if it turns on and off while water is not being used.

43. Avoid unnecessary toilet flushes. Dispose of tissues, insects, medicines and other waste in the trash.

General Water Saving Tips

44. Follow community water restrictions and conservation guidelines. Private well users must also comply.

45. Report broken pipes, open hydrants, free-flowing wells and other water losses to the property owner, local authorities or water management district.

46. Use the services of businesses that conserve water, including restaurants that serve water only upon request.

47. Support projects that increase the availability of reclaimed waste water for irrigation and other uses.

48. Support programs that promote water conservation among tourists and the businesses that serve them, such as WaterCHAMP and Green Lodging.

49. Conserve water when you are staying at a hotel by requesting fewer replacement towels and sheet changes.

50. Do something every day to save water. Every drop counts.

For MORE water conservation information and materials, visit us on the Web at www.savewaterfl.com

REDUCE YOUR WATER USE no excuse!

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Broward
954-713-3200
Florida Keys
305-453-1275
Lower West Coast
239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201
Martin/St. Lucie
772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100
Miami-Dade
305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300
Okeechobee
863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200
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