



Brazos County
Master Gardener Association



Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

50 Plus Ways to Be Water Smart

BEHAVIORS

1. If your local water utility offers water saving incentives or in-home water audits, take advantage of these programs.
2. Don't let water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving.
3. Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it. Use it to water your indoor plants or garden.
4. In the shower, turn water on to get wet; turn off to lather up; then turn the water back on to rinse off. Repeat when washing your hair.
5. When hand washing dishes, save water by filling two containers – one with soapy water, one with rinse water containing a small amount of chlorine bleach.
6. Do not waste water in the shower while waiting for it to get hot. Capture it for other uses such as plant watering.
7. Take shorter showers. Strive for a 5 minute shower.
8. Place a bucket in the shower to catch excess water to water plants. Save bath, shower, and laundry water for toilet flushing if water is in extremely short supply
9. Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Don't let the tap run while you are waiting for water to cool.
10. Use the garbage disposal less often. Compost organic matter from your kitchen.
11. Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator, or use the defrost setting on your microwave.
12. Steaming vegetables takes less water than boiling.
13. Kitchen sink disposals require lots of water to operate properly. Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing of food waste.
14. Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
15. Turn softeners off while on vacation. Install water softening systems only when necessary.
16. Collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables and reuse it to water houseplants and/or shrubs.
17. Minimize rinsing before using dishwasher. Scrape dishes off rather than rinse off.
18. If you have an evaporative air conditioner, direct the water drain to a flower bed, tree, or your lawn.
19. Select the minimum water volume per load if your washer has a variable water volume setting.
20. Run the washing machine only when you have a full load of clothes.
21. For lightly soiled laundry loads, use the shortest wash cycle.
22. To avoid redundant washing, pre-treat stains on your clothes.
23. Encourage family members to wear clothing more than one time if possible. This will reduce the number of laundry loads needed each week. Spot clean to reduce washings when possible.
24. Use bath towels more than once. Have individual bath towels with a place to dry between uses.
25. Clean sidewalk, driveway, and patio with a broom rather than by hosing off.

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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating

26. Use a bucket for soapy wash water and rinse quickly with a hose when washing house windows or a car.
27. Water lawns early in the morning or late at night to avoid evaporation
28. Avoid watering lawns in windy weather
29. Provide only the water plants need.
30. Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface and cut down on weed growth.
31. Raise your lawn mower cutting height – longer grass blades help reduce evaporation
32. Minimize or eliminate fertilizing in order to reduce new growth and the need for additional watering
33. Teach children to not waste water in play. Avoid recreational water toys which require a constant stream of water.
34. If you have a pool, use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when pool is not being used
35. Do not install or use ornamental water features

USE EQUIPMENT EFFICIENTLY

36. Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or set the water level for the size of load you are using.
37. Running the dishwasher only when it's full can save 1,000 gallons of water per month.
38. Running a full dishwasher usually uses less water than washing the same number of dishes by hand.
39. Set irrigation sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only – not the street or sidewalk.

FIX LEAKS (Maintenance and repair)

40. Make sure your home is leak-free. Check your water meter when you are certain that no water is being used. If the meter reading changes, you have a leak!
41. Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year. Check for toilet leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If you have a leak, the color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. (Flush immediately to avoid stains.)
42. If the toilet handle frequently sticks in the flush position, letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.
43. Regularly check washing machine hoses for leaks.

Install Water Saving appliances, equipment and devices

44. When buying a new appliance, remember that certain models offer different cycles that are more water and energy-efficient. High efficiency dishwashers and clothes washers use much less water. Look for Energy Star and Water Sense labeled products.
45. Conventional washing machines use between 35 to 50 gallons per load (gpl). The newer front-loading machines are more efficient and use between 18 to 20 gpl.
46. Energy Star Dishwashers use 12% less water per load.
47. Retrofit all household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
48. Install a shut-off valve on shower to stop the flow of water temporarily without affecting the temperature.
49. Install a toilet displacement device to cut down on the amount of water needed for each flush. (Don't use a brick! There are devices available at most hardware and home centers.) Be sure installation does not interfere with the operating parts. Consider low-volume toilets which use less than half the water of older models. NOTE: In many areas, low-volume units are required by law.
50. Replace your showerhead with a Water Sense shower head (2.0 gpm) or an ultra-low-flow version (less than 2.0 gpm).
51. Consider installing an instant hot water heater on your sink and insulating your water pipes.

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52. Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees, or shrubs
53. Select plants that are appropriate for your climate.
54. Use low-water and drought-resistant grass, plants, shrubs, and trees.
55. Install moisture sensors on sprinkler system
56. Install a rainwater harvesting system for landscape watering
57. Utilize gray water system for landscape water

Sources:

American Red Cross

Colorado State University (<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/09952.html>)

Washington State University (<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb0732/eb0732.pdf>)

http://www.lowes.com/cd_Conserve+Water_954111562

Water Consumption Calculator <http://www.csgnetwork.com/waterusagecalc.html>