

HOW TO CONSERVE WATER WHEN THE TEMPERATURES RISE.

(copied from the Gettysburg Times April 25, 2017)

Spring and summer are synonymous with increased hours of sunlight, warm temperatures and, oftentimes, an increased reliance on water to feed recreational pursuits and lawn and garden needs.

The Water Information Program states that 3.9 trillion gallons of water are consumed in the United States each month and the average person uses 176 gallons of water per day. Water conservation may be essential when the risk for weather-related drought looms. Practicing year round conservation efforts can help ensure smart usage of local watersheds, lakes and reservoirs and help maintain these water sources for years to come. It also helps the average person reduce his or her carbon footprint while saving people a little money along the way.

Explore these water-saving tips to make smart use of water:

- Collect shower water in a bucket while you are waiting for the water to heat up. Use that water to irrigate plants around the house or even outdoors.
- Check for leaks around the house. Put a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank and see if it spreads into the bowl within a half hour. If it does, that means a leak is present and gallons of water may be wasted.
- Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator. This way, when you come inside from the heat you'll have a cold drink ready and will not have to run the tap to fill a glass.
- Install a lawn irrigation system so that you can maximize the amount of water that gets to the roots. Arrange the sprinkler heads so surrounding driveways and sidewalks are not getting "watered" as well.
- Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer required, as fertilizers can increase water consumption.

- Aerate lawns and garden beds so the water reaches the roots rather than running off the surface of the dirt.
- Employ rain barrels to collect rain water runoff. Rain barrels can help to repurpose rain water rather than simply allowing it to wash into storm drains.
- Reduce reliance on sprinklers and hoses for summer recreation. Instead, rely on pools and other devices that use re-circulating pumps.
- Homeowners with pools can limit how often they backwash their pool filters
- Solar pool covers can warm up pool water naturally and also reduce the rate of water loss through evaporation.
- Inedible plants can benefit from the nutrient-rich water siphoned out of a home aquarium when cleaning the tank.
- The conservation guide Earth Easy says one way to cut down on water use is to turn off the shower after soaping up, then turn it back on to rinse. A four minute shower can use between 20 and 40 gallons of water.
- Add organic matter to the landscape to increase water absorption and retention. Top dress areas as needed throughout the season.

Water conservation efforts can help homeowners maintain their lawns and gardens during heat waves and even save them a little money while benefitting the planet as well.