

# Water Conservation Tips

## Bathrooms

### Reduce

- **Turn off the tap** when brushing your teeth, shaving or washing your hands. Fill the sink with a few centimetres of warm water to wash or rinse your razor while shaving. For brushing, fill a glass with water to rinse your mouth.
- **Take shorter showers** and use only a portion of the water you currently use or fill the tub one-quarter full if you prefer a bath.

### Repair

- Check for leaks - To check for leaks in your toilet, add a few drops of food colouring or a cooled cup of black coffee to the water in the tank and wait a few minutes. If, without flushing the toilet, the colour appears in the bowl your toilet has a leak that should be repaired immediately.
- A toilet that continues to run after flushing, if the leak is large enough, can waste up to 200,000 litres of water in a single year!

### Retrofit

- **Showerheads** - older showerheads can use about 20L of water every minute. Replace your older showerhead with a new low-flow showerhead and save water and money. Look for a showerhead that uses 9.5L per minute or less.
- **Taps** - faucet aerators can reduce water use by 25 per cent. Replace your older aerator with a new low-flow aerator and save water and money.
- **Toilets** - older toilets use about 20L of water per flush. The Ontario Building Code requires 6L low-flow toilets for new construction and 13L toilets for renovations.
- There are many products that you can install in the tank of an existing water-guzzling toilet to reduce the amount of water used, such as a water displacement (plastic bag or bottle), water retention (toilet dams) or alternative flushing (early closure or dual-flush)
- Check with your local plumbing supply or hardware store to find which method will work best for your toilet. Don't put rocks or bricks in your toilet tank as these can breakdown over time and cause damage. Or replace your water-guzzling toilet with a low-flow 6L version, a 3L/6L dual flush, or high efficiency 4L flush toilet - that's 1/5 the volume of water per flush (and 1/5 the cost!).
- **Turn off the tap** - For a cold glass of water, keep a jug in the fridge instead of running the tap.
- **Dishwashers** - always wash full loads for greatest water and energy savings or adjust the settings to the amount of dishes to be washed.
- **By hand** - to wash dishes by hand only fill the sink one-quarter to half full. Rinse using a second, one-quarter to half-full sink and avoid running the water.
- **Steamed not boiled** - Steaming food uses less water, less energy and helps to retain nutrients. When boiling, use only enough water to cover the food and use a tight-fitting lid. To the top - always wash full loads for greatest water and energy savings or adjust the water level to the amount of laundry to be washed.

- **Check for leaks** - regularly check taps and pipes. Prompt repairs can save water, money, and prevent potentially costly property damage. Stop drips and save dollars - faucet washers cost pennies and take minutes to install.
- **Taps** - faucet aerators can reduce water use by 25 per cent. Replace your older aerator with a new low-flow aerator and save water and money.
- **Front and centre** - Top-load washing machines have agitator arms that generally reduce the size of load that can be washed. Front-load washers do not have agitator arms, and are more gentle on clothes. Wash larger loads and remove more water during the spin cycle to reduce drying time.
- **Spotted** - When purchasing a new appliance spot the Energy guide sticker and check the rating to determine energy efficiency and potential savings.

## Kitchens and laundry

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## Driveways, cars and sidewalks

Did you know? One drop of oil can render up to 25 litres of water unfit for drinking.

### Reduce

- **Clean sweep** - use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and patios, instead of the hose. Let the rain take care of the rest.
- **Turn off the tap** - use a bucket and sponge to wash your car and a trigger nozzle on the hose to wet and rinse suds away.
- **Use a car wash facility**- that recycles its water and collects and separates out greases and oils.

### Repair

- **Check for leaks** - regularly check connections and hoses for leaks. Prompt replacement of an inexpensive washer could save water, money and possibly prevent costly property damage. A leak of only one drop per second wastes about 10 000 litres of water annually.

### Retrofit

- **Trigger change** - use a trigger nozzle on a hose to stop the flow of water when not in use.

## Pools and hot tubs

### Reduce

- **Cover up**- covering your pool or hot tub when it's not in use will reduce energy costs, evaporation and the amount of water required for top-up.
- **Turn off the tap** - lower water level in your pool or hot tub to reduce water loss due to splashing. Pools should only be filled to 15 to 20 cm from the top.
- **Back off on backwashes** - limit backwashes to one to two minutes or until the water becomes clear. Longer backwashes waste water and chemicals.

### Repair

- **Check for leaks** - Regularly check connections, liners, and pipes for leaks, prompt repair could save water, money and possibly prevent property damage. A leak of only one drop per second wastes about 10 000 litres of water annually.
- **Get the dirt out** - check the pump strainer basket and the skimmer basket daily and remove any debris. This can improve water circulation and result in cleaner water.

### Retrofit

- **Pre-screen** - consider adding a pre-filter to the skimmer basket, this may reduce the frequency of backwashes to three or four times per season.

## Lawn Watering and Irrigation

The way in which you water your lawn is just as important as how often and how much you water your lawn.

**Did you know-** Most yards are over watered by at least 50%!

### Tips:

- Water your lawn and garden only when necessary and according to municipal by-laws.
- Purchase a rain gauge to determine how much rain or irrigation your yard has already received each week.
- Look for signs of overwater such as leaves turning yellow or lighter green, or algae and fungi growth
- Water your plants deeply but less frequently to create healthier and stronger landscapes
- Adjust your lawn watering schedule and method so that it is specific to your lawn's soil condition as well as to the weather.
- Avoid overwatering. Watering your lawn too much and too often will cause shorter root systems to develop making it susceptible to dry conditions. One inch of water per week is enough.
- The best time to water your lawn or garden is the early morning. Avoid watering in the late evening which can cause long periods of dampness increasing the risk of disease and fungus. In general, avoid watering during the day as well as on windy days and do not leave sprinklers on for the entire day.
- Set your lawn mower blades higher. Longer grass means less evaporation and deeper roots.
- Avoid using a lawn sprinkler. If you must use a sprinkler, install a water efficient component such as a low rise sprinkler head, soaker hoses, or a drip irrigation system. Make sure you are not watering sidewalks and driveways.
- Consider using a drip or trickle irrigation system for landscaped areas and flower beds.
- When selecting plants and grass to reseed your landscape, consider drought-resistant grasses and plants.
- Group plants with the same watering needs together to get the most out of your watering time.
- To maintain healthy plants, including trees and shrubs, water needs to reach deep down to their roots. The best way to do this is to use a garden hose at the base of a tree that drips at a rate of approximately 3 drips per second. The watering time required is dependent on the size of the plant. Watering times range from one hour for a rose bush to four hours for an old tree.
- Regularly check that your sprinkler and timer system is operating properly.
- Outfit your hose with a shut-off nozzle which can adjust the water flow rate.
- Eliminate hose and tap leaks by using hose washers between the spigot and the water hose.

## Naturescaping

Are you tired of having to weed your garden, mow the lawn and prune your shrubs on your day off? Maybe you should consider alternatives to the current high maintenance and high water demand landscape.

Consider Naturescaping to save time, money, water, fuel, and fertilizer!

### Did you know?

- Lawns do not need to be watered every day! A healthy lawn only requires 25 mm or 1 inch of rain per week.
- Operating a typical gas-powered lawnmower for one hour pollutes as much as driving a car for 560 kilometres. These air pollutants contribute to climate change and smog which can damage human health.

### Tips and Added Benefits:

- Properly placing deciduous trees on the south and west side of your house will shade your home efficiently to ensure lower air conditioning bills in the summer. Also, healthy trees may increase property values.

- Planting coniferous trees on the north and east sides of your home protects it from cold winter winds allowing you to save money on your heating bills in winter months.
- Place a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Bark, compost, organic material mulch or peat moss will slow down evaporation and help keep the soil moist and healthy.
- When landscaping, use native or other low water use plants. Check with your local nursery for the best native or low-water use trees, shrubs, and plant species.
- Decrease the risk of overwatering by grouping plants with similar water needs together.
- Consider replacing your grass with drought-resistant native plants and ground cover. You will save money and time maintaining it.
- The best time to water your lawn or garden is the early morning. Avoid watering in the late evening which can cause long periods of dampness increasing the risk of disease and fungus. In general, avoid watering during the day as well as on windy days.
- Harvest rainwater or position downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees.
- Abide by the City's even-odd lawn watering schedule by-law.
- Match plants and grasses to the conditions present in your property (e.g., soil and sunlight conditions)
- Use a lawn aerator to help soil breathe and maintain its health.
- Raise your lawn mower blade to a height of 7.5 cm (or 3 inches)
- Leave grass clippings on your lawn as they add nutrients to the soil.
- Water your lawn once a week with 25 mm (1 inch) of water unless it has rained.
- Use a soaker hose to water your garden beds. Healthy plants in your gardens require 25 mm of water per week. Watering infrequently promotes the production of deeper roots in plants.
- Pull weeds by hand when the soil is moist.
- Spread organic material such as compost on your lawn each year.
- Apply natural fertilizer in late spring and fall.
- Spread mulch (such as leaves, bark chips) in garden beds and around trees.
- Only mow the lawn when needed during the growing season. Remove only a third of the blade at each mowing. Leave clippings on your lawn as they provide valuable nutrients and moisture.
- Overseed your lawn in the late spring or mid-August to mid-October. Ask representative at your garden centre to recommend a suitable grass mix.

- New trees planted in your yard need to be watered with 2 to 3 cm of water per week for the first two seasons. Beginning in the third season, they need to be watered every 2 to 3 weeks during a dry period or once a month for older trees.