

Who conserves water?

People use water every day so everyone can conserve water. We need it for drinking, preparing food and for washing. It keeps our gardens and parks green. Industry and farmers use water to make the food and products we buy. With everyone using water, we are all responsible for trying to conserve it. If more water is used when water supplies are low, the government can bring in water restrictions.

Households

We can conserve household water use, both in the house and in the garden. It can be as simple as turning off the tap when brushing your teeth. Or it could be by choosing plants for the garden that suit a dry climate and need less water. If each person uses less water, overall it saves large amounts.

People use a lot of water on their household gardens.

Water Saver Tip

Water wastage

Turn off dripping taps. A tap dripping at one drip per second can waste 30 litres of water per day. That equals three full buckets of water.

Governments

State governments are responsible for water supply in Australia. The governments use companies, called water suppliers, to deliver water to households, farmers and industry. Governments make laws and policies so water suppliers can control how much water we use. Some of these laws and policies are aimed at conserving our water supplies. During droughts governments bring in water restrictions so that people at home and work conserve water.

Many parks, schools and public swimming pools are run by different levels of government. All of these places have conservation programs to save water.

Farming and industry

Farmers need water to grow food and industry needs water to make products. Together, they are the biggest users of water in Australia. Both farmers and industry are finding ways to conserve water. Some industries recycle or reuse water. Farmers use many ways to save water, such as covering **irrigation** channels to slow down evaporation.

Waterwise Fact

Water usage

Australians now use 65 per cent more water than they did in the 1980s.

Irrigation channels near Kununurra, Western Australia, are used to water crops.

Governments are responsible for public gardens, such as this one in Mildura, Victoria.

Governments publish brochures about water saving to educate people.

Water conservation around the house

Each family can conserve water by making changes at home. Technology has also made household appliances more 'waterwise'. There are many ways in which we can save water for the future.

In the bathroom

In the average home around half of the household water is used in the bathroom. Dual-flush toilet systems can save many litres of water when the half-flush is used. We can also save water by having shorter showers and using a water-efficient shower head. A three-minute shower uses less water than a bath.

A water-saving shower head sprays fine jets of water, so less water is used.

Short showers use less water than a bath.

Waterwise Fact

Shower heads

Old shower heads deliver 20 litres of water per minute. New water-efficient shower heads add air as the water sprays out so it seems as if there is the same amount of water. They use as little as 8 litres of water per minute.

In the laundry

Around one-third of the water that is used at home is used in the laundry. This is mainly used by the washing machine. New washing machines use just enough water to clean a load of washing. Older washing machines often fill water to the top, no matter how big or small the load of washing.

In the kitchen

Water is used in the kitchen at the sink and in the dishwasher. Putting in the plug and filling the sink to wash dishes or vegetables saves more water than washing things under a running tap. Only use the dishwasher when it is full, instead of after every meal, to help conserve water.

Waterwise Fact

Water-using appliances

Water-using appliances have ratings to show how water-efficient they are. One system uses A for inefficient and AAAA for very efficient. Another system uses stars to rate water efficiency. Labels on the appliance say what rating it has. Some governments give money back if people buy the water-saving appliances.

Look for the label on each water-using appliance to see how water-efficient it is.

Front-loading washing machines use about half the water that a top-loading machine needs.



Gardens

Almost half of household water is used outside the house, mostly on gardens. Many gardens are watered with automatic sprinklers. The timers can be set to time limits, and can be programmed to work at night, when water will not evaporate as quickly. Using sprinklers twice a week or not watering lawns cuts down on water use. Gardens should not be watered every day as surface water draws the roots of the plants nearer to the surface, instead of encouraging the roots to grow down into the moist soil below the surface.

To stop water evaporating from the soil, **mulch** is often used to cover the soil around plants. Some plants use less water than others. Native plants found in your region are best because they have adapted to local growing conditions.



Automatic sprinklers can be timed to water deeply once or twice a week to make the plants stronger.



Some grasses cope well with dry conditions, and only need to be watered occasionally.

Waterwise Fact

Garden sprinklers

The average garden sprinkler can use up to 100 litres per hour. A drip system saves water. It uses 4 litres per hour and delivers water to the roots, where it is needed.

Rainwater tanks and bores

Household rainwater tanks can save water. When it rains, water runs off the roof and into the tank, instead of entering the stormwater drains. This water can be used later for watering the garden.

In many parts of Australia households can tap into a **ground water** aquifer, using a **bore**. This water can be used on the garden, to help conserve **mains water**.

Car washing

Car washing can waste lots of water. People who use buckets, instead of a running hose, can conserve hundreds of litres of water. Car wash businesses are very water-efficient, as they use less water and can recycle water.

Pools and fountains

Swimming pools lose water to evaporation, especially on hot days. Pool covers reduce evaporation and stop the need for regular refilling. Fountains can recycle their water using a pump.

Backyard ponds with fountains can lose a lot of water through evaporation.

Car washes that recycle their water use half as much water as those that do not.



Water Saver Tip

Car washing

Washing a car with a running hose for 12 minutes can use 200 to 300 litres of water. Use a bucket to limit the water use to 30 litres, or three full buckets.

