

Tips to Conserve Water This Fall and Winter

According to the Texas State Water Plan, our states existing water sources will meet only 75 percent of the projected water demand by the year 2050. That's why it's critical to use our water resources more efficiently to prevent shortages. During the extreme drought of 2006 and 2007 residents had to comply with mandatory water restrictions. From late spring through the summer of this year, the region received generous amounts of rain. Water Conservation, However, is still as important as ever. Use these important fall and winter water conservation tips to continue conserving water:

- Be aware that the water needs of plants (including grass) drop dramatically in the fall. Over-watering in the fall can lead to plant disease.
- Outdoor watering should be cut back significantly. Cooler weather and seasonal rains make it possible to stop all supplemental irrigation.
- Avoid watering in the evening if possible. Fungal problems are more likely if plants are wet all night during fall months.
- Use organic mulch around winter plants, especially around trees.
- This is a good time of year to stop using soaker hoses and put them away for the winter.
- Lawns need very little irrigation in the winter. At the most, apply ½ inch of water every three weeks to St. Augustine grass if there is no rain.
- Your landscape irrigation should drop to nearly zero in the winter because only potted plants and other winter annuals need occasional watering.
- If the shower can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace it with a water efficient showerhead.
- Replace old toilets with more efficient low flow toilets and save as much as five gallons per flush and be careful to flush only when necessary.
- Don't let water run continuously while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Re-use water when you can. A bucket in the shower can catch water for plants and clean-up jobs.
- Install water efficient faucets throughout the house. There are numerous water-saving devices on the market. Look for aerators, flow regulators, and displacement devices to make your home conservation-friendly.
- Fix leaks. A faucet that drips can waste up to 3,280 gallons of water per year.
- When washing the dishes, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water. Soak pots and pans before washing. Use minimal detergent so you don't have to rinse as much.
- If you use a dishwasher, only do full loads and avoid extra cycles.
- Rinse vegetables in a pan of cold water or wash foods in a basin of water, rather than using running water.
- Thaw frozen food in your refrigerator.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost instead and save gallons every time.
- Use a carwash to wash vehicles, boats and motorcycles.

- If you hand wash your car use a bucket and use a positive shut off device such as a spray nozzle.
- Check the water meter and monthly bills to track water usage. A higher bill could mean you need to repair a leak.
- Never pour anything other than water down the drain. Fats, oils and grease clog the sewer system and chemicals may cause water and wastewater treatment problems.