



# Save Water - Save the Planet!



We all want to ensure we leave a greener planet to our children & grandchildren.

To do this we have to take steps now to ensure sustainability.

Whilst more than two thirds of the earth is covered by water - less than 1% of that water is freshwater – 97% is salty and the remaining 2% is ice.

It is important that everyone makes an effort to conserve water.

Water conservation has two aspects:

- Using water efficiently so that there is enough for the needs of all living things.
- Keeping freshwater clean, so that it can continue to support life on earth.

There's little doubt that weather patterns in Australia are changing and that people in general are becoming increasingly conscious of water being a precious resource.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that 9% of Australia's total water use occurs in the home. Every household in Australia uses about 294 kilolitres each year. This amount varies around the country due to climate (the Tasmanian average is 176kL per year and the Northern Territory average is 500kL per year) even though Tassie has the lowest usage we should not become complacent – with a little effort we could use water more wisely.

Your water bill shows the amount of water you use which is a great starting point for improving your understanding of your water use & how you can make improvements by monitoring your usage.

We can save water in many different ways, but to understand how these ways help save our environment, we must understand that all things can be linked together. For example, by planting trees, we can reduce the amount of soil that enters and pollutes our waterways. Saving water is not difficult and we can all make a difference by changing our habits at home and in the garden. On the following pages are some of the simple steps you can take to reduce water consumption & prevent the waste of high quality, treated drinking water - you'll be amazed how much water - and money - you could save each year.



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## In the home:

- \* Check for dripping taps out in the garden & inside the home. Dripping taps waste around 2,000 litres a month - so fix them straight away! Also check for a leaking toilet! If you can hear a leak in the toilet then it is time to fix it. A leak from a toilet can sometimes be seen flowing at the back of the bowl (you can add some food colouring to the cistern to check). Often the only thing needed is a new washer. Ask your local plumber for help.
- \* Install a water-efficient showerhead. Water-efficient 'AAA' showerheads use less than 9 litres of water per minute, compared to a normal showerhead that uses 25 litres per minute. They often also have an on-off facility for shampooing & uses less hot water -thereby saving energy too.
- \* Compost your own! A waterless toilet works just like a garden compost bin, with your waste being mixed with other organic matter. Ventilation is very important to the process. Come into Stoneman's & see our Nature Loo display & information sheets look for Tassie Loos in our Product area on our website for more information.
- \* Put a brick in your toilet - If you have an older toilet put a brick or water filled bladder (like an empty wine cask) into the cistern to reduce the amount of water used with each flush. You can also just bend the arm of the cistern to reduce the amount of water the toilet uses OR you can install a 'toilet flush arrestor' to reduce the water used with each flush.
- \* Convert to a dual-flush toilet - New dual flush toilets use 6 litres of water for a full flush, and 3 litres for a half-flush. Some older cisterns use 11 litres with each flush.
- \* Don't flush the toilet if it's only liquid – if you use this rule the toilet will still get flushed more than once a day.
- \* Convert to a water-efficient dishwasher. The best dishwashers have highly effective spray systems and use water efficiently during the wash and rinse cycles. Don't forget to only use your dishwasher for full loads.
- \* Convert to water efficient taps - Water efficient taps use 50% less water than standard tap fittings.
- \* Rinse the fruit and vegies in the sink - instead of rinsing your fruit and vegies under the tap, half fill the sink and give them all a good scrub at the same time.
- \* Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth! The tap doesn't need to be on until you rinse.
- \* Share a shower or make it quick! A typical shower lasts on average about 8 minutes and uses about 25 litres per minute. Share a shower and save water and money by saving on your water and electricity/gas bills.
- \* Wash your car with a bucket and sponge on the lawn. This way your lawn will get a drink, you'll save water and you won't contaminate local waterways. If you don't have room, then go to a car wash that recycles its wastewater;





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The greatest opportunity to save water by using it wisely is definitely

## In the garden:



Start with the easiest things first –

The first and largest water efficiency gain can be made outside, with careful use of water on lawns and gardens.

- \* Use native plants that are suitable to your garden - they are usually less thirsty than many exotic's and they generally need less nutrients, so you shouldn't need to fertilise very often.
- \* Reduce the area of lawn to water.
- \* Install a rainwater tank for the garden watering and/or for your toilet. This will save a lot of water. It will also reduce the volume of water reaching the stormwater system which will benefit our local waterways.. There are regulations about exactly how the tank can be connected with the toilet so get advice from your local Council before doing this. Some councils offer rates rebates for the purchase and installation of water tanks. See our range of slimline water tanks in-store.
- \* Use plenty of mulch to reduce evaporation and weed growth. Mulching keeps the soil underneath moist, prevents evaporation loss and is one of the cheapest ways to make the most of water in the garden. Ensure the mulch is thick and is placed away from tree trunks to prevent collar rot, and has an even coverage to prevent the growth of weeds. There are many different mulches that can be used effectively on the garden to save water, such as pebbles, bark and gravel, wood chips, saw dust, straw, cow manure and compost.
- \* Use lots of organic matter to improve your soil.
- \* Make your own compost - Keep all your kitchen scraps, lawn clippings and garden waste - they're perfect for homemade compost and your soil will love it.
- \* Fertilise - some fertilizers, such as seaweed extracts, help root growth and can help plants survive dry times.
- \* Watering with a watering can or a hand-held, trigger-operated hose is the most water efficient way of watering the garden. You can direct the water exactly where you want it and stop when you see water running off the garden.
- \* Water early in the morning or late afternoon to reduce evaporation. If you water your garden in the heat of the day more than half the water you use could be lost to evaporation.



- \* Recycle your 'greywater' - Save the water from your kitchen, laundry and bathroom (not the toilet), put it through a natural filter and use it for your garden and to flush the toilet. Or you can install a greywater system - The 2 available types of greywater systems allow you to use greywater in different ways. The first type of greywater diversion device enables untreated greywater to be used for outdoor purposes by distributing water to your garden through a sub surface irrigation system. The second greywater treatment system enables you to use treated greywater for above surface irrigation, toilets & washing machines. Treated greywater can also be stored. Contact your local council for guidelines & regulations.





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- \* When planting new garden beds, group plants with similar watering needs together.
- \* Install a drip irrigation system - Many drip irrigation systems are easy to install and can be purchased from your local hardware shop. With these systems less water is lost to evaporation and wind-drift. Some 'smart' systems include controlling irrigation using soil moisture, wind sensors and rain gauges.
- \* Consider the slope of the land. If you build up a little earth on the down slope side of plants, water will collect around the base of the plant and sink into the ground rather than running straight off.
- \* Water thoroughly but less frequently so that the water penetrates deeper and encourages deeper root growth. This will help to drought-proof your garden. It may also save the garden when you go on holidays.
- \* Keep the amount of lawn to a minimum and don't use it as 'fill in' material. Halve your grass! For those that water their lawn - reduce watering to half as often, replace half your lawn with a garden of native shrubs, or replace the non-Australian grasses with native plants – see our Drought Tolerant [Fact Sheet](#) to find plants suitable for the Tassie climate.
- \* Don't cut lawns too short. When mowing, cut only the top third of the leaf area, leaving it three centimetres or higher. Reduce water loss even further by saving your lawn clippings to use as mulch on your lawn or garden.
- \* Keep lawns well aerated – they'll appreciate it.
- \* Allow lawns to brown in dry summer periods, they will spring back to life when it rains.
- \* Never hose down paths and driveways, sweep them instead. Make sure you don't sweep into the gutter as it will end up in our waterways – instead sweep into garden beds or a rubbish heap.
- \* Always check on current water restrictions – go to [www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au) to check restrictions in your local Tasmanian area.
- \* Cover that pool! Using a pool cover will reduce the water lost to evaporation. A pool cover also reduces the amount of chemicals needed & the amount of leaves that fall into the pool.



\* Don't forget that sprinkler! A forgotten sprinkler can waste thousands of litres of water per hour. A sprinkler timer will allow you to use as much water as is needed without wastage.

For more helpful tips for using water wisely in the house & garden, as well as ways to keep pollutants out of aquatic ecosystems.– go to [www.dpiw.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au)

