

Protecting Our Environment

Drought Or No Drought: Saving Water Is Important Year-Round

(NAPSA)—As temperatures drop, and the word “drought” is no longer in the news, it’s easy to stop paying attention to water use. Reminders to save water are less frequent and many Americans believe our water supply is abundant and constantly replenished—when in fact it’s a finite resource.

While the U.S. population has grown by almost 90 percent over the last 50 years, our water use during that same period grew by a staggering 209 percent. With demand outstripping supply, at least 36 states anticipate local, regional or statewide water shortages by the year 2013, even under non-drought conditions. Using water more efficiently is the easiest and most cost-effective way to help ensure adequate future water supply.

The average family of four uses 400 gallons of water (6,400 full drinking glasses) each day and 70 percent of that is used indoors. This water use could easily be cut by as much as 30 percent if households took a few simple steps to use water more efficiently. In addition to helping protect our water supply, saving water can also help families save money on their water and energy bills.

Here are some simple tips from EPA’s WaterSense program for saving water year-round:

1. Don’t flush money down the drain:



- Check your toilet for leaks. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water per day. Add a couple drops of food coloring to your toilet tank and if color appears in the bowl within 15 minutes, you have a leak.

- If you replace your toilet, shop for a high-efficiency model that uses less than 1.3 gallons per flush. In 2007 you’ll be able to find these toilets by looking for the WaterSense label.

2. Think before you turn on the tap:

- Scrape rather than rinse dishes before loading them into the dishwasher.

- Keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cold. The average faucet flows at a rate of two gallons per minute.

- Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth or shave. You could save more than 100 gallons per month.

3. Use appliances wisely:

- Wash only full loads or set small loads to the appropriate

water level.

- Replace old clothes washers with ENERGY STAR labeled appliances that use less water.

4. Stop leaks:

- Easily corrected household water leaks can account for eight percent of your water bill. Read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is used. If the meter doesn’t read the same, you probably have a leak.

- Repair dripping faucets and showerheads. Fixing a faucet that drips at a rate of one drop per second will save 2,700 gallons per year.

5. Test your WaterSense:

- Find out how much you know about the water you use in your home. Go to the WaterSense Web site at www.epa.gov/watersense and take the Test Your Water Sense quiz.

- Look for the EPA’s Water Sense label, which makes it easy for consumers to recognize products and programs that save water and perform well. Water Sense labeled products such as toilets and faucets will begin to appear on store shelves next year. Also, look for a WaterSense partner when selecting a landscape irrigation professional—a smart irrigation design can help save water that is normally lost through evaporation, run-off or over-watering.