

Timely Tips for Water Efficiency



General

- Keep track of your water usage during November through March. Typically, this is the water usage your family uses indoors and sets your sewer billing rate for the next year.
- Find and fix leaks. Checking for leaks on a regular basis will save you money. Dripping faucets can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water a year. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons of water a day.
- Take shorter showers. Reducing your shower by one minute can save 2,000 gallons of water a year.
- During the holidays, be extra careful to run your dishwasher when it is full to make the best use of water, energy and detergent.
- As you make your preparations for the holidays, clean fruits or vegetables in a sink or pan partially filled with water rather than running water.

Landscape

- Plant or transplant trees and shrubs while they are dormant. Trees and shrubs planted now use this time to their advantage. Roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees or higher. Trees and shrubs get their roots developed and established before the hottest part of the summer months. The expanded root system can support and take advantage of the spring growth that will take place once the warmer weather arrives. The expanded root system also has the ability to absorb more moisture from the soil.
- Take the time to look through gardening books that focus on our region to improve your 2004 landscape. Plants recommended for this area are suited to our hot and dry conditions and require less water to thrive. Plants not suited to our hot and dry conditions end up using large amounts of water. What gardening books from other areas may consider "heat and drought tolerant" may not compare to our summers.
- Collect fallen leaves for use as mulch around trees and shrubs or add them to your compost pile.
- Build a compost bin. Compost added to the soil improves drainage, adds nutrients, and increases the water-holding capacity of the soil. Turn leaves, grass clippings, kitchen waste, small or chipped prunings, spent garden plants, and weeds into nutrient-rich organic matter that improves your soil.
- Mulch around trees and shrubs to save water and protect plant roots. It also reduces water evaporation from the soil. This provides a larger reservoir of moisture for the plants.
- Replace or replenish mulch in landscape beds to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth. It also moderates soil temperature, prevents soil compaction and erosion.

- Water effectively and infrequently. Water to a depth of 5 to 6 inches. This allows the water to get to the root zone where plants can readily absorb it.