

Water Conservation inside the home:

Approximately 60% of total household water supply is used inside the home in three main areas: the kitchen, the bathroom and the laundry room. Follow these tips to reduce water use indoors:

- Make sure all faucets are tightly turned off and not leaking: A leaking faucet could waste up to 4,000 gal/year
- Replace old faucets with efficient models or install aerators to reduce flow

In the Kitchen:

- Run dishwasher only when full and don't prerinse dishes before loading
- Consider water use when purchasing a new dishwasher: New water and energy efficient models use 20% less water
- Defrost food in refrigerator instead of using running water: A running faucet uses about a gallon of water per minute
- Use a dishpan or plug the sink when hand-washing dishes
- Keep a container of water in the refrigerator rather than waiting for cold water from faucet

In the Bathroom:

- Install low flow toilets or toilet dams and test all toilets regularly for leaks: A leaking toilet could waste up 100 gal/day
- Do not use the toilet as a wastebasket
- Take shorter showers and replace old showerheads: Low flow showerheads can save 3 gal/min
- Turn off water when shaving or brushing teeth

In the Laundry:

- Run full loads of laundry instead of many small loads and consider energy and water efficiency when purchasing new laundry machines: Newer models use 40% less water and can save up to 6000 gal/year

Water Conservation outside the home:

Approximately 40% of total household water supply is used outside the home. Often water resources are sprinkled, squirted, dripped, gushed and wasted outside the home. Follow these tips to reduce water use outdoors:

Landscape Irrigation:

- Install efficient irrigation systems such as drip irrigation, soil soakers, and sprinkler systems
- Set sprinklers for lawn and garden only, don't water the street or sidewalk
- Water the lawn only when the ground is dry and preferably no more than once a week: The amount of water used by a sprinkler in one hour is equal to the daily water needs of a family of four
- Water during the coolest part of the day (preferably morning) and never water on windy days: As much as 30% of water used can be lost to evaporation
- Pull weeds to decrease competition for water
- Increase mowing height to 2-3 inches and apply mulch to both reduce evaporation and prevent weed growth
- Limit grass areas and use trees, shrubs, and other plants that require less water to landscape your yard: Grass turf requires 30- 50% more water

Other Outdoor Tips:

- Repair or replace leaking hoses and sprinklers
- Always use an automatic shut-off nozzle
- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean decks, sidewalks, and other paved areas: 5 minutes of running the hose uses 25 gallons of water
- Collect rainwater for reuse in the garden whenever possible
- Cover pools to prevent evaporation: An average uncovered pool loses about an inch of water a week because of evaporation

Why Use a Rain Barrel?

A Water Quality & Conservation Fact Sheet



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Why use a Rain Barrel?

Typically, rain water runoff is collected in storm sewer systems and released directly into streams. This direct runoff can contribute to flooding in developed areas with a lot of impervious surface (like roofs, sidewalks, parking lots, and other surfaces that don't allow rain water to drain). This runoff carries with it pollutants that contribute to poor water quality that can affect the health of local waterways and even your drinking water. These issues are of particular importance in highly developed areas as more impervious surfaces cause more runoff during a rain or snow event.

When you collect rain water that would otherwise enter the storm sewers, you are helping to minimize the amount of storm water that will directly runoff into streams. A rain barrel won't solve the flooding issue by holding back all the storm water, however it is a good start and it gets homeowners thinking about water conservation.

Not only do rain barrels conserve water and control runoff, they can give you a good idea about the large amounts of stormwater that is shed from impervious surfaces.

A formula to remember: 1 inch of rain on a 1000 sq ft roof yields 623 gallons of water. Calculate the yield of your roof by multiplying the square footage of your roof by 623 and divide by 1000.

Depending on your roof area - a rain barrel will fill up when there has been as little as 1/10th inch of rain (based on the fact that 1 inch of rain on 1000 square feet roof area equals about 625 gallons of water). Because plants thrive on natural rain water - no chlorine, ammonia, fluoride, or other chemicals from municipal water systems, the rainwater collected and stored in rain barrels is ideal for watering lawns and gardens.

Tips for using your Rain Barrel:

- Do not use collected water for drinking, cooking or bathing.
- Keep the lid secure so children or animals cannot fall into the barrel.
- If a moss killer has been used on the roof, let a few rainfalls occur before collecting the roof runoff.
- The screen will prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your barrel.
- Consider joining multiple barrels for additional capacity!
- To get the downspout water into the rain barrel, you will have to cut or remove a portion of your downspout, and install the provided downspout adapter from your downspout to the top of the rain barrel.
- Disconnect the barrel during the winter to avoid freezing and breaking of the barrel and its valves. Drain the system and connecting hoses by leaving the drain of the barrel open or turn the barrel over to drain and store the barrel with hoses in a protected area.

What is Nonpoint Source Pollution?

When many people think of pollution, they are probably picturing pollution discharging directly into the stream or river from a known site such as a sewer plant or industry. This type of pollution is known as point source pollution. Unlike point source pollution, nonpoint source (NPS) pollution comes from many sources and is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground (carrying human-made and natural pollutants with it). The pollutants that are carried with stormwater eventually dump into streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands, and even into our underground drinking water supply - having implications for us and the natural resources around us.

Examples of Nonpoint Source Pollution:

- Excess fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide, and storm-water runoff from residential and agricultural areas
- Excess nutrients and harmful bacteria from faulty septic systems, pet waste, and live stock animals
- Accelerated sediment runoff from construction sites, dirt and gravel roads, timber operations, and some farming practices
- Oil, salt, paint, heavy metals, and other toxic chemicals from urban developments

Why should I care?

Because it affects everyone. NPS pollution originates from parking lots, construction areas, farms, and even your own property. The pollution may ruin your drinking water, kill the fish at your favorite fishing spot, and pollute your child's swimming hole.

What can I do?

Individuals can play an important role by practicing conservation and by changing certain everyday habits:

- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paints, and other household chemicals properly (do not pour down sink, into storm drain, or on the ground).
- Inspect septic system every couple years to ensure system is working properly.
- Keep litter, pet wastes, leaves, and debris out of street gutters and storm drains.
- Do not apply more than recommended amount of fertilizers and pesticides to your lawn and garden or, better yet, use a soil test kit.
- Use rain collection devices, like rain barrels, to collect and store rain water runoff during a rain event or plant a rain garden.