

Outdoor Tips

Leave it natural

Landscape with hardy native plants that are acclimated to the local climate and rainfall.

Let it grow

Raise your lawnmower blade to at least three inches; taller grass has healthier roots that hold soil moisture better.

Time it right

Water in the early morning to avoid losing water to evaporation during mid-day. Water slowly and deeply to avoid surface runoff, inspect hoses for leaks and direct overhead sprinklers toward vegetation and away from the street or driveway.

Reuse water

Use non-contaminated excess water from cooking or dehumidifiers to water plants and gardens. Install rain barrels to collect water from rooftops to water your lawn and garden. An inch of rain falling on a 1,000 square foot roof will contribute about 600 gallons of water.

Give your hose a break

Sweep driveways, sidewalks or steps rather than hosing them off. Check all hoses and spigots for leaks or poor connections and replace washers or hoses if needed. Disconnect hoses during cold months to avoid freeze damage.

Wash cars at a car wash or on the lawn

Use a carwash that recycles water, or if washing a car at home, do it on the lawn so excess water will be absorbed rather than running off into storm drains. Use an environmentally-friendly soap product and be sure never to leave the hose running when it's not in use.

Water Facts

- While 75 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, less than one percent is available for human use.
- More than one trillion gallons of water are wasted each year in the U.S. alone due to easy-to-fix water leaks in the home.
- Ten percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons of water or more per day.
- Letting a faucet run for five minutes uses about as much energy as keeping a 60-watt light on for 14 hours.
- Fifty percent of water used for watering gardens and lawns is wasted due to over-watering.
- The average American uses 100 gallons of water each day, enough to fill 1,600 drinking glasses.

LCC's Work

The Lake Champlain Committee is a membership-supported, bi-state non-profit organization working since 1963 to protect Lake Champlain's water quality and recreational access through science-based advocacy, education and collaborative action. Please join us in the work for clean water!



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Water Conservation

in the Lake Champlain Basin



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Water Use and Lake Health

Why conserve water in a wet environment like the Lake Champlain basin?

Wasted water contributes to lake pollution. Sewage treatment plants remove phosphorus and other pollutants from the water that leaves our homes and businesses but the efficiency of that removal decreases when sewage is diluted by leaked tap water. Also, municipal drinking water systems often add a phosphorus-containing compound to drinking water to prevent lead from leaching from old pipes. This compound must then be removed from wastewater before it enters Lake Champlain. Removal is not 100 percent efficient, so wasted water leads to additional lake pollution.

Energy Savings

Wasting water also wastes energy. The biggest use of electricity in many communities is supplying water and cleaning it up after it's been used. A lot of energy is consumed to collect, transport, treat and deliver water and wastewater. Water must be pumped from its source to its end use in houses, apartments, businesses and institutions then collected again for treatment. Reducing water use and fixing leaks saves money and lessens demands on the energy-intensive systems that deliver, treat and heat water.

Indoor Tips

Check your water meter

To determine if your household is leaking water, check the meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is used. If the number changes, you have a leak.

Replace wasteful fixtures

Replace inefficient fixtures with WaterSense-labeled products to save water and money in the long run. They are 20 percent more efficient and perform as well or better than traditional models.

Twist on a faucet aerator

Faucet aerators cost only a few dollars at your local hardware store and can be easily installed. Add them to save more than 500 gallons of water each year without decreasing flow.

Pick up the pace

Bathrooms account for half the water used indoors by American families. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and shave and save up to four gallons per minute. That's up to 200 gallons a week for a family of four.

Shorten your showers

If your shower fills a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the showerhead with a WaterSense-labeled model which saves about seven and a half gallons of water for every five minutes of showering.

Tap in

Place a bucket in your shower to capture the water that runs while you're waiting for it to get hot. Use the water to water plants.

Test your toilet tank

Add 12 drops of food coloring to your toilet tank. If color shows up in the bowl within 60 minutes without flushing, you have a leak! Toilet leaks are often due to worn out toilet flappers or leaking gaskets under the flush valves. Seek help from a plumber or hardware store to fix the leaking or running toilets.

Lighten your laundry

Always match the water level to the size of the laundry load. If shopping for a new washing machine, compare resource savings among Energy Star models. Some save up to 20 gallons of water per load, with front-loading machines being the most water and energy efficient.

Cook and clean smart

Don't run water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety. Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of using tap water. Compost your vegetable scraps instead of using the garbage disposal. Garbage disposals use energy and about four gallons of water per minute.

Wash dishes wisely

Fill one basin with wash water and use another for rinsing to avoid running the tap while washing dishes. If you have a new dishwasher cut back on rinsing since newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.

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