

Tips for

# **waterwise** **LIVING**

in Southern California

**home and garden**



**bewaterwise.com**

# Water Saving Tips for Home & Garden

Conserving water is nothing new to Southern Californians. We've been doing it for years, and our water-efficient practices have set standards that distinguish us from the rest of the nation.

But there's always room for improvement. Most of us have replaced our toilets and showerheads with more efficient models. When we turn our attention outdoors, we zero in on where the majority of water is used. Depending on lot size and climate zone, between 30 and 70 percent of all household water is used for landscape irrigation. And on top of that, the average homeowner uses twice the water needed to keep plants healthy.





The California Friendly® garden offers a less thirsty, more environmentally friendly and eye-catching way to save water.

The good news is that saving water—both indoor and outdoor—doesn't have to mean inconvenience if you are thoughtful and use only what you need. We've collected some easy tips and tasks you can do to make your home even more water efficient.

For a comprehensive list of current rebates and other incentive and training programs for both residential and business customers, visit [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com).

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# Beautiful and Water California Friendly Gardens—

You can have a garden that is beautiful and water-wise by following these basic principles:

- Use less thirsty plants in your garden. Keep turf grass (the thirstiest plant of all!) to a minimum. Use warm-season turf and look for native and California Friendly plants that are well suited to regional and local conditions. Warm season turf include St. Augustine for shaded lawns and Zoysia ‘Victoria’, De Anza or hybrid Bermuda for sunny lawns. Log on to [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com) and check out the California Friendly Gardening Guide, with garden templates, pictures and information on plants that look great and use little water.
- Water plants only when needed. Water in the early morning, when evaporation is low and air is calmer. Avoid runoff and over spray. Use tools such as the Watering Calculator and Watering Index (you can find them at [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com)) to adjust watering times to plant needs. Cash in on rebates for smart sprinkler controllers and precision rotating sprinkler heads.
- Group plants thoughtfully. When selecting trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials and annuals for your garden, look for varieties that naturally grow together and use about the same amount of water.



# Wise Landscapes

- Improve your soil. Routinely cultivate your soil, incorporating organic matter such as compost. This will help the soil's ability to resist evaporation and retain moisture. Aerate heavy or compacted soil around trees.
- Mulch. **Save 20-30 gallons** of water per day by using mulch around trees and plants. A two- to four-inch layer of mulch also evens out extreme temperature and retains moisture. It prevents soil from crusting, allowing better water penetration.
- Plant trees. Trees help to lower air and soil temperatures, reducing plant and soil moisture loss.
- Group container plants with similar needs. Arrange containers so they shade one another. During droughts or periods of drying winds, place them in the deepest shade they can tolerate. Wet the entire rootball; double the size by transferring plants from smaller pots into larger pots with a layer of soil around and under the root ball. Top-dress pots with a layer of mulch over the soil.
- Have turf only where you need it and water only when needed. Step on your grass. If it springs back when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water.
- Set lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation.

# Sprinklers



If you have automatic sprinklers, chances are you are watering more often than needed. Follow these simple steps to make sure you are using the right amount of water.

- Re-examine your watering schedule by using the Watering Calculator at [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com). It takes into account variables like plant needs, soil conditions and weather.
- Reduce irrigation cycles by 1-3 minutes or eliminate one cycle per week and **save 15-25 gallons per minute** and up to **250 gallons per cycle**.
- Water only before 8 am to reduce evaporation and wind interference and **save 20-25 gallons per day**.
- Invest in a “smart controller” and let it adjust your watering needs automatically. Smart controllers take over decisions about when and how much to water and **save about 40 gallons a day**.
- Replace the sprinklers. Upgrade your sprinklers with new, water-saving rotary nozzles that keep your landscape healthy while reducing run-off.
- Adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray and runoff and **save 15-25 gallons per day**.
- Repair leaks and broken sprinkler heads and **save up to 20 gallons per leak per day**.
- If you consult a landscape contractor, ask them about their knowledge of water-efficient landscaping.

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- Don't water when it's raining, and adjust your sprinklers for cool, overcast days. Many automatic timers can be fitted with rain shutoff devices.
- If you decide to convert your landscape to a California Friendly version, don't be overwhelmed. You can work in sections, a little at a time, to make it more manageable and more fun. Start with container pots and keep on going! You can **save 33-60 gallons per day** per 1,000 square feet depending on climate if you replace some lawn with California Friendly plants.

For more product information, visit [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com).

## Other Outdoor Tips

- If you have a pool or spa, use an insulated cover to cut down on evaporation. Repairing leaks around the pool and spa pumps can **save 20 gallons per leak per day**.
- If you have an evaporative air conditioner, direct the water drain line to a flowerbed, tree base or lawn.
- Use a broom to clean your driveway or sidewalk, not your hose. Make sure your gardener also complies. **This saves 8-18 gallons per minute** depending on water pressure and hose size.
- Instead of washing your car at home, find a professional carwash that recycles water. Or if you wash your car at home, use a bucket and turn the hose off between rinses.

# Indoor



## Bathroom

- Replace your toilet with a new high-efficiency toilet, or dual-flush toilet. Go to [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com) for a list of models eligible for rebates.

- Remember not to use your toilet as a trash can.

**You'll save 1.6 gallons every flush.**

- Is your toilet leaking? Put food coloring in the tank and see if it enters the bowl without flushing. If it does, replace the flapper. A leaky toilet wastes 30-50 gallons per day.

- Install a new water-efficient showerhead. It stretches the availability of hot water and saves energy.

- While waiting for the shower to warm up, catch the cold water in a container to use on plants. **A shorter shower saves 2.5 gallons per minute.**

- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or while shaving and **save 2 gallons per minute.**





## Plumbing

- Fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints inside and outside of your home. **You'll save 15-20 gallons per leak per day.**
- The next time a plumber visits, have him or her check your household water pressure, and if it is more than 80 psi, ask the plumber to install a pressure regulator.
- If you have a rotary dial water meter, check to see if there are any leaks. If it's spinning and there's no water being used, there is probably an undetected leak somewhere.



# Indoor

## Appliances

- Use the garbage disposal less and garbage can more. Consider composting.
- Run only full loads in the clothes washing machine. **You'll save 15-50 gallons per load.**
- Select a high-efficiency clothes washer when replacing your old machine. For a list of current models and rebates, visit [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com). **Save 20-30 gallons per load.**
- When washing dishes by hand, use the least amount of detergent possible. If you have two sinks, fill one with rinse water. If you only have one sink, use a spray device or short blasts instead of letting the water run. If you don't leave the water running when rinsing dishes, **you'll save 2.5 gallons per minute.**



- Run only full loads in the dishwasher and **save 2-4.5 gallons per load.**
- If your automatic water softener recharges using a time clock, turn down its recharge frequency and remember to turn it off when you go away for a few days.

## **Kitchen**

- Defrost frozen foods without running water. Either plan ahead by placing frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or defrost them in the microwave.
- Clean vegetables by rinsing them in a filled sink or pan.



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