

WATER AND HOW TO SAVE IT

In this country we are very lucky. Very few people do not have access to clean water but it is important that we do not take it for granted and assume that the supply is indefinite. It is almost our duty to use water sensibly and frugally where possible. If you are on a water meter you will save money.

The 3 R's of recycling, in this order, are Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Where water is concerned it is the first R that is the easiest.

Now for some numbers. The average person uses 150 litres of water per day. Try to picture 150 litres of water. It is a lot, isn't it? The average household usage is as follows –

15% laundry

27% Showers

16% kitchen

18% flushing the loo

12% bathroom tap

6% bathroom sink

6% other

Showers - there are several ways in which to save water when showering. To start with, showers do not run hot when you first turn them on. If you have space enough in your shower cubicle, put a small bucket in the cubicle and run the cold water into it. This water can then be used for many other purposes – possibly flushing the loo. You might even like the idea of taking the 4 minute shower challenge or, alternatively, shower just as long as it takes you to sing your favourite pop song.

Flushing the loo - a leaking loo can waste up to 400 litres of fresh water per day so before any other measures ensure that your loo is not leaking. 400 litres of water is the equivalent of five bath tubs! If your loo does not have the option of different volumes of flush, a good way to reduce the amount of water used is to place in the cistern something that will take up space in the

cistern and thereby reduce the volume of water available to be flushed. You can also ask yourselves if the loo needs to be flushed every time it is used. There is also the option of always closing the lid. This in turn also means that you are following feng shui principles.

Kitchen - when doing the washing- up by hand, use a bowl in the sink and if you like to rinse your hands while preparing food, run a small amount of water into the bowl rather than running the tap each time. When boiling water in the kettle try to use only the amount you need each time. This will also save electricity. Many electric kettles show the volume of water in the kettle but if not, you could fill the kettle a cupful at a time to test how much you need.

Laundry - Most of us like clean clothes so we have to use our washing machines. Most modern machines will have water usage options so try and use the one that uses the least water. If possible try and wash only when you have a full load. This saves the electricity a well.

Bathroom - Some people like a relaxing bath every evening, either to help them get over the day they have just spent or to get them ready for a good night's sleep, bearing in mind that that bath uses about 80 litres of water, almost 2 showers' worth. Perhaps you need to ask yourself if that amount of water use is justified, could the level of the water be slightly lower or is it just a practice that could be reduced to every other evening, or perhaps you could justify continuing it by making a real effort to drastically reduce the amount of water you otherwise use.

Bathroom sink - If you use the bathroom sink in the morning to, literally, just wash your face, put a small bowl in the sink to run the water into and when you have finished you then have a bowl of 'grey' water. This water can be put to very many uses that do not need fresh clean water. Water the garden or plant pots, wash the kitchen floor or car, clean the front door.....the list is endless. We now come to another use for the bathroom sink and it is important that nobody gets too upset by the next advice because this is one of the exceedingly rare occasions when your mother was not right. There is no need to run the tap while you are brushing your teeth! We have all done it because that is what you did. The only time you need turn on the tap is when

you have finished brushing your teeth and need to rinse the brush. You do not need to rinse your mouth with water and if you want to check with your dentist he will say that it is much better for your teeth to stay with a slight coating of the toothpaste to let it carry on its job. Leaving the tap running can waste 6 litres of water a minute each time you clean your teeth.

Other - this will mainly be the use of water outside the house, primarily in the garden. This is where you need a water butt to collect the rain that falls on the roof and would otherwise go straight down the drain.

Try not to overwater the lawn because this encourages surface rooting rather than deep roots, and after cutting the lawn leave the clippings on the lawn to provide a nutritious mulch. Where ever possible chose plants that don't need lots of water such as succulents, lavandin which is a type of lavender, or one of the lychnis plants.

Having chosen your plants, the right kind of container or location can make a big difference.

Choose a natural dip in the ground to plant a rain garden

Keep your plants hydrated with water storing gels

Choose ceramic and metal plant pots over terracotta, or line your pots with polythene to stop water draining away.

If you have a pond or swimming pool, in warm weather it is a good idea to cover it to reduce the evaporation. Surface plants, such as water lilies will help in a pond and are natural cover.

You can get more water saving ideas and free water saving gadgets here

<https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/save-water/free-products/>

Prepared by Cllr. Rita Wood as part of Stithians Parish Council's Climate Emergency 23 point plan January 2020. For more information visit <https://www.stithiansparishcouncil.org.uk/>