

The graph below illustrates average indoor and outdoor water use in a typical U.S. single-family home.²

Outdoor 31%



Indoor 69%

WATER:

A Precious Resource

Water is a basic building block of life yet we often take it for granted. Modern plumbing brings water to our homes and businesses, often giving the impression that we have an endless supply of water. However, the amount of water on the planet is actually finite. **Approximately 3% of the earth's water supply is fresh but less than one third of 1% is available for human use!**

Water conservation allows us to use water more efficiently and reduce water waste. **Making a habit of conservation makes sense.** Water conservation helps protect our water supply, saves energy and saves money.

This pamphlet provides a few tips on how to conserve water in your home. For more information on water conservation, please contact your local water utility or visit:

www.preservingeverydrop.com.

Did You Know?

In DuPage County, the average person:

- Uses 106 gallons of water each day.¹
- Approximately 31% of this water is used for outdoor purposes.²

For an average non-conserving home, 80-90% of this outdoor water use goes towards landscape irrigation. Small steps in outdoor water use can save a lot of water. Efficient water use can cut down on water waste and still provide water for plants and turf. Outdoor water efficiency is especially important during the hot summer months when as much as 50% of home water consumption is for watering lawns and gardens.

- A typical Illinois lawn needs about 1- 1 ½ inches of water each week, including rain according to www.gardenillinois.com.
- In Illinois, cool season grasses can go dormant during hot, dry weather without watering and recover when growing conditions improve in the late summer or early autumn.
- Overwatering causes runoff, wastes water, and carries fertilizers and other chemicals into the sewer system.

¹ Summary of data from DWC and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Data does not include unaccounted for flow values for Argonne or IAWC.

² Vickers, Amy. "Handbook of Water Use and Conservation" WaterPlow Press, 2001.; Data based on average indoor use in a non-conserving home – 69.3 gallons per capita per day for indoor water use and 31.7 gallons per capita per day for outdoor use.



OUTDOOR Water Use



Getting Started

- **Water your lawn in the early morning** or in the evening, when temperatures are cooler and water isn't lost to evaporation.
- **Use a broom instead of a hose** to clean your driveway and sidewalk.
- Adjust sprinklers so you **don't water the house, sidewalk, or street.**
- Use a timer to keep track of watering time and **avoid overwatering.**
- **Adjust your mower to a higher setting.** Taller grass cools the soil and encourages deep roots. If you mow your grass too short, root growth slows down, making the grass more susceptible to heat and drought. Or use a mulching mower.
- **Fertilize once a year in October** after the rainy season to allow fertilizer to be absorbed by the roots. Always use zero phosphate fertilizer.
- Be creative – **wash your dog or your car on the lawn** in an area that needs water.



Dive in Deeper

- **Use a rain gauge** and make weekly changes to your irrigation controller to account for weather changes. A hearty rain can eliminate the need for watering for up to two weeks. Check the soil below the surface before watering because even though the surface is dry, there may be moisture below the surface.
- **Select a sprinkler** that releases water slowly and close to the ground rather than one that releases a mist that tends to evaporate quickly.
- **Compost kitchen scraps, lawn clippings and garden waste** – they're perfect for homemade compost, which your soil will love. It also helps retain water and reduces erosion and weed growth, which compete for water and nutrients.
- **Wash your car at a car wash that recycles water** or try using a waterless car wash. If you wash your own car, use a hose nozzle and turn off the water while you soap up your car. Use phosphorus-free soap. It's better for the environment. Or consider washing your car on your lawn so any water used will benefit the turf as well.
- **Mulch around trees, shrubs and flowers** to help retain soil moisture and prevent weeds. Mulch slows evaporations, keeps plant roots cooler and controls weeds.

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Preserving Every Drop

Plant with Purpose

- **Limit turf grass to areas for practical use.** Use native and/or adapted plants that will enhance the site and minimize long-term water consumption. Group plants into high, moderate, and low water-using systems. Place plants where they can be watered and maintained efficiently. Avoid placing lawns on slopes or in areas that are unused or are hard to maintain.

Save the Leftovers

- **Direct downspouts towards shrubs** or trees or connect downspouts to a rain barrel.
- **Use extra water captured from indoor uses** (heating up the shower, rinsing produce, etc.) as part of your watering procedure. Extra coffee and tea as well as water drained from pasta or boiling potatoes are all suitable for watering shrubs and evergreens.
- **Install covers on pools and spas to reduce evaporation.** A pool cover is a great way to reduce evaporation and the need to regularly top off your pool's water level. Without a cover, more than half of the water in your pool can evaporate over a year, with more than ¼ of the water in your pool evaporating between April and September.
- **Aerate your lawn once a year,** particularly if your soil is compacted. This will improve the lawn's health and ability to absorb water.

