

Why Save Water?

With many parts of Texas facing the worst drought in 50 years, saving water now is more important than ever. By knowing your Facts from your Myths you'll not only raise your Water IQ, you'll make our water last.

Myth: If it rains, the drought will be over.

Fact: While the recent rainfalls help, they won't end the drought. The ground is so dry it acts like a sponge, absorbing rain and preventing crucial runoff into streams and lakes. It's going to take steady rainfall over a sustained period of time to catch up. Heavy rains over a short period of time won't solve the problem.

Myth: To really make a difference, everyone must drastically reduce their water use.

Fact: Using just 5, 10 or 15 percent less water will make a big difference. If everyone does their part, we can extend Texas' water supplies and survive the drought. You don't have to be a math wizard to figure out how to cut back by 5, 10 or 15 percent. Just read your latest utility bill and note how many gallons you consumed. Then multiply the number of gallons by .05. For example, if you used 8,000 gallons, multiply 8,000 by .05, .10 or .15. The result of this equation is your goal savings for the month. Don't worry, you can easily reach this goal and still have plenty leftover to brush your teeth and wash behind your ears.

Myth: It's more effective to save water inside your home rather than to cut back on outdoor watering.

Fact: You can make the biggest difference saving water by reducing your use outdoors. Little things make a big difference. Check for leaks in taps, pipes and hoses. One slow drip can waste 20 gallons of water daily (7,000 gallons per year). Operate sprinklers manually—don't rely on timers. If you must use a timer, learn to operate it correctly. Check sprinkler systems frequently for directional aim and broken heads to prevent watering driveways, sidewalks and streets. Have a professional inspect your system annually for leaks. Pay close attention to your pool's water level. If the level varies drastically from day to day, you probably have a leak and need it serviced immediately.

Myth: Watering daily is the only way to maintain a healthy, green lawn, especially during the summer.

Fact: Water your lawn to the depth recommended by your local water authority. Over-watering is just as bad for landscapes and can cause wasteful (and harmful) run-off. Experts recommend watering your lawn deeply and infrequently to promote a strong root system.

Myth: The best sprinklers shoot high, fine sprays, which mist your landscape without wasting water.

Fact: Just the opposite. The best sprinklers throw large drops of water low to the ground rather than misty sprays that allow water to evaporate quickly. Try a pressure-regulated spray head, which keeps the pressure constant. Use soaker hoses instead of sprinklers to water trees, shrubs and beds more efficiently. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, you'll really impress your neighbors by replacing your timer with an evapotranspiration (ET) controller. These smart controllers monitor information about soil moisture, rain, wind and evaporation so your system only waters when it's truly needed. Traditional timers require manual adjustments every time the weather changes. ET controllers use real-time data from local weather stations to make adjustments automatically and can reduce water use by about 30 percent.

Myth: Keep your lawn short. Shorter grass uses less water, so you don't need to water as much.

Fact: Let your hair down and let your grass grow. Raise your lawnmower blade to a height of at least 3 inches. A taller lawn will help shade your soil so it requires less water. When you let your grass grow taller, its roots grow deeper, and you'll have a healthier lawn.

Myth: The best way to fill your pool is to drop a hose directly into the water.

Fact: You should never submerge a watering hose into the pool to refill it. You won't hear the hose running underwater and could forget that you left it on. Not only is it wasteful, but you might flood your yard—or the neighborhood. Plus, unless you have an anti-siphon device installed, your chemically treated water could back flow into the City's water supply. Position the hose above the water surface so you hear the hose water running. That way you'll remember the water is on.

Lower Your Water Use. Raise Your Water IQ.

