

# Saving water in your home and garden

Help stop the drop

## Give your house a water check-up

Now that we've given you numerous tips for saving water in and around your home, why not give your house a water check-up? It's simple. All you have to do is refer to the "water-saving issue" column and rate your performance.

Water-saving issue		
<p><b>Do you have leaking taps in the bathroom, kitchen, laundry and/or outside?</b></p> <p>A dripping tap wastes about 12 litres of water every day.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well done!</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To stop leaking taps, check and replace worn or broken washers, damage to the washer "seat" located inside the tap body or worn or broken "O" rings located on the spindle.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you have a leaking toilet?</b></p> <p>A slow leaking toilet can waste 4,000 litres of water per year.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good work!</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>UNSURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To check if your toilet is leaking, add a little biodegradable food dye to the toilet tank. If the dye runs into the bowl (without pressing the flush button) the cistern needs repairing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you have leaking pipes?</b></p> <p>A single leak over a long period of time can waste thousands of litres of water.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Way to go!</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>UNSURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read your meter last thing at night and ensure no appliances are left on overnight including evaporative cooling systems. Then compare the reading first thing in the morning. A change in the reading may indicate water is being lost.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you have a water-saving showerhead?</b></p> <p>AAA-rated showerheads can reduce water consumption from 24 to 9 litres (or less) per minute.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many outlets stock AAA-rated showerheads, including the ActewAGL Home Connect Store in Civic.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fantastic work!</li> </ul>

Water-saving issue		
<p><b>Do you have a pool cover?</b></p> <p>A pool cover can reduce evaporation by 95 per cent.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can purchase a cover from pool supply shops.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great job!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is your garden mulched?</b></p> <p>Mulching will reduce evaporation and prevent run off.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember, any mulch is better than no mulch.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank you - you're doing your garden a favour and using less water.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you water just because you can?</b></p> <p>If you only water your garden once a week you train it to use less water.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thanks for saving water.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ActewAGL's Save Water Ambassador Cedric Bryant said, "You may think that watering your garden once a week will not be enough, but by doing so you train it to use less water and adapt to the summer conditions."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you wash your car on a hard surface or wash down paths with the hose?</b></p> <p>The average garden hose delivers over 1,000 litres of water an hour.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You're doing the right thing!</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To conserve water you should always use a bucket to wash the car and, where possible, rinse it on the lawn. A broom should always be used to sweep paths.</li> </ul>

By addressing your water-saving issues, you're not only saving money, but most importantly you are saving valuable water.

[www.actewagl.com.au](http://www.actewagl.com.au)

## Customer enquiries

**13 14 93** - electricity, water, sewerage and other services  
**13 18 86** - natural gas  
 24 hours

## Emergencies and faults

**13 10 93** - electricity  
**13 11 93** - water, sewerage and stormwater  
**13 19 09** - natural gas  
 24 hours

## Postal address

ActewAGL  
 GPO Box 366  
 Canberra ACT 2601

## Language assistance

如果您需要幫助，請打電話給下面的號碼。

¿Necesita un intérprete? Llame al número indicado abajo.

هل نتحتاج إلى مترجم؟ اتصل بالرقم ادناه.

Trebatte li pomoć tumača? Nazovite niže navedeni broj.

Nếu quý vị cần sự giúp đỡ, vui lòng gọi số bên dưới.

Se vi serve un interprete, telefonate al seguente numero.

Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, τηλεφωνείτε στον αριθμό παρακάτω.

**13 14 50**  
 24 hours



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## Help stop the drop

Water is a precious resource that we can't afford to waste. Here are some tips on how you can help save water and save money on your water account.

### Saving water in the home



Only use the washing machine for full loads.



Fix leaking taps.



Only use the dishwasher for full loads.



Reduce your shower time by five minutes to save around 50 litres of water.



On a dual-flush toilet use the reduced-flow option where possible.



Consider using greywater from the bath or laundry on the garden, but don't place the water on edible plants, and be sure to use it within 24 hours (for more information visit [www.thinkwater.act.gov.au](http://www.thinkwater.act.gov.au)).

### Saving water in the garden

Here are some useful hints to help you maintain your garden using less water.

#### Soil types

Clay soil is the norm in the Canberra region. This type of soil will hold water for longer but can only absorb around 3 to 8mm of water per hour, as opposed to loam and sand soil which can absorb up to 25mm per hour. Clay soils make dripper systems the ideal choice for irrigating your garden.

#### Drip irrigation

Drip irrigation uses flexible piping that is easily installed and suitable for most garden environments. The systems may consist of plastic flow-control devices (known as on-line) or a drip emitter in the drip tube (known as in-line).

Using drip irrigation saves water and also reduces evaporation and wind drift as the water is applied directly to the root area and absorbed quickly, not sprayed into the air like other types of irrigation systems. Run off is also reduced as the application occurs slowly, allowing the water time to be absorbed.

When installing a drip irrigation system, consult with your local irrigation supplier.

#### Watering

A common question is how much water do my plants and garden need. There is no simple answer but you can follow these simple steps to help understand your garden's watering needs better.

1. **Water** – for about 15 minutes.
2. **Investigate** – have a dig around in the garden and check the water penetration (you can use a screwdriver or garden spade).
3. **Act** – if there hasn't been enough water penetration complete the cycle again.



### Divide your garden into sections

You can also divide your garden into sections and take it in turns to water one section at a time once a week. You may think that watering your garden sections once a week will not be enough, but by doing so you are training your garden to use less water and adapt to the conditions.

When watering, water the base of the plant or shrub, not the leaves. And remember don't water for a week after good rain.

#### Drought-resistant plants

One of the best ways to save water is to select plants that tolerate dry conditions. But remember that plants will only be drought resistant after they have established a good root system. It's important to feed and water new plants until they are established.

For a colourful display in your garden, consider a mix of Australian and exotic plants.

A list of plants suitable for a low-water garden is available on the ActewAGL website. You can also ask your local garden centre for advice.

For more information on low-water gardens visit Xeriscape Gardens at Heysen Street, Weston. The gardens are open on weekends from spring to autumn from 1.30 to 4.30pm or by prior arrangement. Call 6242 1191.

#### Mulch

Mulch saves water in your garden by keeping soil cool in summer. This reduces evaporation and prevents run off because water that soaks into the mulch is gradually released into the soil. When choosing mulch remember that any mulch is better than no mulch.



The most commonly used mulches are:

- shredded lucerne (high in nitrogen and great for the garden)
- wood chips and pine bark
- raked-up shredded leaves
- pine mulch
- forest litter
- small twigs and straw
- inorganic material like gravel
- pea straw or compost

The best time to apply mulch is annually during spring. Before you apply mulch prepare the ground by weeding, breaking up the soil and watering thoroughly. It is best to apply mulch 75mm thick and keep it away from the plant stem to avoid collar rot.

#### Wetting agents

When applied to soil, wetting agents slowly release water into the plant's root system. To ensure that the wetting agent works effectively, mix it well into the soil before applying mulch or compost.

Wetting agents can be used at any time during the year and are available in a liquid or granulated form.

#### Less lawn

Think about the overall design of your garden and avoid the temptation to have large lawn areas. Consider including paving, pebbles and increasing the size of your garden beds for a functional garden and entertainment area.

#### Covering pools and washing the car

To stop the water in your pool evaporating, always keep it covered when not in use.

And, why not do your lawn a favour by washing the car on it with a bucket.



#### Water restrictions

Before watering, make sure you are aware of any water restrictions or water conservation measures in place. To find out what currently applies in Canberra, call 6248 3131 or visit [www.actew.com.au](http://www.actew.com.au)