



Toronto
Green
Community

WATER CONSERVATION

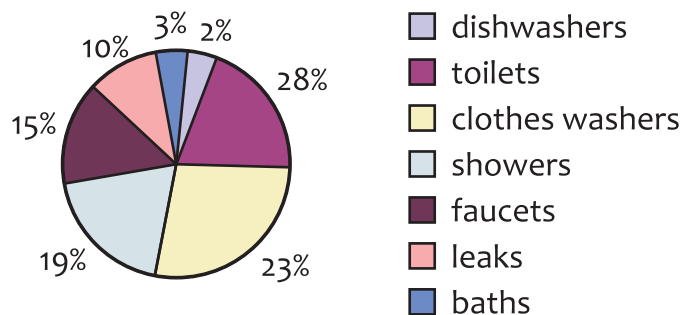
Water is essential to sustain all forms of life on our planet, but it is not an unlimited resource. Although water covers 70% of the Earth's surface, clean drinking water sources are scarce and dwindling everyday.

In Toronto, everyone has access to high quality clean water from Lake Ontario at a very low cost but this water is not a renewable resource. The Great Lakes are “fossil water” left over from the melting of the great ice sheets. While only 1% of the water is replenished by rain every year, about 2.2 billion litres are withdrawn from the Great Lakes every day for drinking water.

The average Toronto household uses 253 litres per person daily. With every litre of water pumped weighing 1 kg, a family of four uses a tonne of water each day. It will take billions of dollars to maintain this for future generations. It is up to us to minimize unnecessary use of water to protect and conserve our water supply for today and tomorrow.

Follow our water conservation tips to reduce the amount of water you use and save money too!

**PERCENTAGE OF WATER USE
PER DAY PER PERSON**



BEST WAYS TO SAVE WATER AT HOME

- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving
- Use low-flow toilets, showerheads and other fixtures
- Take shorter showers
- Buy a high efficiency washing machine
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only with a full load
- Repair leaks and drips

BEST WAYS TO SAVE WATER OUTDOORS

Outdoor water use can account for up to 50% of overall home water use. Here are some great tips to help you reduce outdoor water waste:

Water slow, deep & early: Water less often and only when it is really needed. Water in the morning to reduce evaporation. Deep, slow watering encourages deep roots which better withstand drought.

(see) <http://www.toronto.ca/waterff/watering.htm>

Reduce or replace your lawn: Less lawn means less mowing and watering, therefore less air pollution, less water wasted, and more habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

Harvest your rain or build a rain garden: Rain water is warmer, hasn't been chlorine treated, and contains extra nutrients. It is free, and saves expensive drinking water. You can get a rain barrel or direct water from your downspout into a rain garden where you can concentrate plants that need more water.

Mulch: Cover bare soil to hold moisture, keep roots cool, and reduce weeds. This will help restore nutrients into the soil and increase soil organic matter. Save leaves for mulch and winter composting.

Compost: Compost holds nutrients and moisture for plants to absorb and is the key to healthy soil. Add two to four inches of compost to the soil. This will increase the ability of the soil to retain water moisture.

Xeriscape: Choose plants that need less water, especially native plants that are adapted to local conditions, require less water and are less susceptible to pests, avoiding toxic pesticides that end up in our lakes).

Outdoor cleaning: Sweep sidewalks and driveways clean instead of using a running hose

Car Wash: Never wash your car at home as the pollutants will be washed directly into the lake. Car Washes capture and filter dirty water before releasing it into the sewer system.

BOTTLED WATER

Results of a four-year study testing 1,000 samples of 103 brands of bottled water, found, "An estimated 25 percent of bottled water is really just tap water in a bottle--sometimes further treated, sometimes not." If the label says "from a municipal source" or "from a community water system," it's tap water. (*Natural Resources Defence Council 2003*). Also, bottled water is subject to much less rigorous purity standards and less frequent tests for bacteria and chemical contaminants than those required of tap water.

Bottled water requires massive amounts of fossil fuels to manufacture and transport, and it takes three to five litres of water to produce a one litre plastic bottle of water. Nine out of every ten bottled water containers are thrown away rather than recycled. Globally that adds up to 30 million bottles thrown away every day.

So drink from the tap and carry re-useable water bottles!

THE RIGHT TO WATER

Water is vital to people's health and livelihoods - no one should be able to control it or expropriate it for profit. In the current global water crisis, billions of people still lack access to basic water and sanitation services. Everyday, thousands of people die from preventable diseases contracted because they do not have access to clean water.

In Canada, there is no national strategy to address urgent water issues or to protect our water. Our freshwater faces crises including contamination, shortages and pressure to export water to the United States through pipelines and diversions.

The Council of Canadians' water campaign is calling for a national water policy that protects Canada's water from bulk exports and privatization. For more information see: <http://www.canadians.org/water>.

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