

## Saving Water: A Precious Resource

### Why we care

When we conserve water in our homes and yards, we reduce chemicals used to purify it, energy used to pump it, and energy used at the sewage treatment plant. We also allow more water to be released from the dams to keep stream flows and temperature suitable for fish. In the Portland area, water demand peaks in the late summer when stream flows are lowest. Meeting peak demand will only become more difficult as the population increases and water supply decreases due to global warming.

### Simple, positive change

- Watering lawns consumes more water than any other home use. Stop watering. Your grass will turn green again when it rains.
- Replace grass with native and edible plants or ground cover. See <http://watoxics.org/files/plant-selection.pdf/view>.
- Use soaker hoses for shrubs, trees, and vegetable gardens. For isolated plants, use a hand-held hose, or poke a hole in a milk jug filled with water and let it drain slowly.
- Mulch heavily to keep moisture in the soil.
- Toilets are the biggest water consumers inside the house. Try:
  - A displacement device. The Portland Water Bureau supplies free toilet tank bags.
  - A behavior change. If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down.
  - A low-flush toilet or dual-flush toilet, which saves even more.
- Check for leaks. Turn off all faucets and look at your meter. If there is a leak, check the toilet by putting food coloring in the tank and waiting ten minutes. You have a leak if color appears in the bowl. A medium leak can waste 150 gallons per day.
- New legislation may soon allow use of grey water for irrigating outdoor plants, but currently it's still illegal.

**Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at [jeanne@earthleaders.org](mailto:jeanne@earthleaders.org).**