



WATER SAVING ADVICE

With another exceptionally dry winter many parts of the country have drought orders in place because underground water supplies have simply not been replenished. Don't be deceived by the very wet April we have just experienced. Most of that water has either evaporated or been taken up by plants—very little of it will have found its way underground.

Ground water levels in Shropshire are very low and last summer (2011) some households not on mains water supply experienced water shortages. Wells and bore holes ran dry, those relying on natural springs found their supply dwindling and these homes were having to bring in water from other sources. Indeed the situation was so dire for some that they closed up their homes and moved out through lack of drinking water—something we all take for granted at the turn of the tap.

Our climate is changing and some parts of the country no longer get sufficient winter rain to keep reservoirs and ground water supplies topped up for the coming summer. River levels are lower and farmers who have in the past relied on bore holes or rivers to provide water for irrigating their fields are having to consider alternative, more drought resistant crops. This will undoubtedly influence some food prices.

Below are some water saving facts and tips we could all do well to be aware of:-

The average person in the U.K. uses up to 150 litres of water a day, much of which does not need to be of drinking quality

- ◆ Toilet flushing 33%
- ◆ Personal water, baths and taps 24%
- ◆ Clothes washing 13%
- ◆ Showers 12%
- ◆ Washing up 7%
- ◆ Drinking 4%
- ◆ Other 8%
- Rain water can be used for many tasks that do not require drinking quality water—car washing, garden watering, toilet flushing, window cleaning etc. It can be simply stored in water butts and the average house roof in the West Midlands can collect some 40,000 litres a year. Did you know that if your down pipes discharge into a soak away rather than the public sewer you can get a reduction on your water rates.
- New build properties can install an underground filtered rainwater storage tank—the water is suitable for using in your washing machine, toilet flush etc.
- A standard toilet flush uses up to 13 litres per flush! Dual flush cisterns only 6 litres for a full flush and 4 for a short one.

- If you have a pre 2001 cistern, consider fitting a “save a flush bag” available free from your water company
- Don't leave the tap running whilst brushing your teeth. A running tap uses 6 litres a minute
- Stop those drips—a dripping tap can waste up to 5000 litres a year costing £18.00
- Washing up by hand typically uses 60 litres a session. A modern dish washer uses only 15 litres
- Shower rather than bath and limit the time. A bath can use over 100 litres, a shower less than a third though power showers can use more than a bath full in 5 minutes
- Reuse bath water to water the garden but don't store for long or use on fruit or vegetables
- If you must water the garden, do so in the morning or evening when evaporation is less
- Run washing machines and dish washers full. A half load can use more than half the water
- Keep a jug of water to cool in the fridge rather than run the tap to get it cold
- Save cold run off from the hot tap and reuse
- Wash fruit and vegetables in a bowl and then save the water for another use
- Only fill the kettle with the amount you need to boil. Saves electricity as well as water
- Garden sprinklers use up to 1000 litres an hour, a hose pipe up to 18 litres a minute
- When planting out your garden, consider drought resistant plants and vegetables
- Mulch plants with bark chippings or better still well rotted grass mowing's to conserve water in the soil
- Daily watering discourages plant roots to grow deeper
- Consider fitting a water meter—its free and will encourage you to use less water
- It takes 1kw of energy to deliver 1 cubic metre of water to your tap
- National water consumption is rising 1% per year
- 40% of the world experiences water shortages
- In some parts of the world people have to walk miles to obtain a few litres of polluted water to drink
- There are many other water saving ideas. Think about what else you could do to save this precious resource.
- Water, like electricity is a resource it is so easy to take for granted—albeit at a cost to us. We get used to it being there at the turn of a tap or flick of a switch.

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