

HCIJO Green Tip: Conserving Water – part 1

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Water, one of Earth's most precious resources, is increasingly scarce in many parts of the world, so it is no surprise that an important part of "living green" is water conservation. Using less water also, for most of us, means using less energy to transport, process, heat and cool it so decreased water usage can impact global warming too.

In the next several Green Tips, we will explore some simple ways to conserve water inside our houses and outside in the yard and garden. This week's tip focuses on water-saving in the bathroom.

- One of the most effective and easiest ways to save water is to **turn off the tap** while brushing your teeth. For most faucets, letting the water run continuously for two minutes sends at least 1.5 gallons of unused water directly down the drain. You can also cut water loss from faucets by **installing faucet aerators**, which mix air into the water resulting in a strong stream that uses less water.
- To keep unused water from the bathtub drain, place a bucket under the tub spout to **capture the water** flowing while it warms up and use the collected water for other tasks like watering plants.
- Saving water while bathing is easy too. First of all, **take a shower** rather than a bath. Generally, a shower uses about a third of the water it takes to fill a bathtub. Keep your **shower time to a minimum** – five minutes is ideal. You can shrink your shower water usage even further by installing an inexpensive [low-flow showerhead](#) and turning off the water while soaping up.
- Toilet flushing accounts for about one-third of all household water usage. This can be cut in a number of ways. If you have an older toilet, consider replacing it with a **low flow toilet** that uses only 1.6 gallons/flush. If you can't replace your toilet, you can still cut back on water usage by simply **filling a small plastic jug with water and putting it in the tank** of your toilet (add a few stones so that it will sink, if necessary). Since the jug takes up space, less water is used per flush.

Tell us your ideas for saving water – we'll be happy to post them on the HCIJO website!

In peace,
Mary