

# Water Color<sup>sm</sup>

*A Southern Coastal Landscape*

## **Water Conservation Techniques**

### **Saving Water Indoors**

1. Verify that your home is leak free. Read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak.
2. Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. A faucet dripping at a rate of one drop per second can waste 2,700 gallons per year.
3. If the toilet handle frequently sticks in the flush position letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.
4. Take shorter showers. Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version.
5. Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded. Set the water level for the size of load you are washing.
6. When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet.
7. Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Don't let the tap run while you are waiting for cool water to flow.
8. Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or use the defrost setting on your microwave.
9. Install water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum amount of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness. Turn softeners off while on vacation.
10. Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.

### **Saving Water Outdoors**

1. Plant it smart. Xeriscape landscaping is a great way to design, install and maintain both your plants and irrigation system. More importantly, it will save time, money and water. For your free copy of Plant it Smart, an easy-to-use guide to Xeriscape landscaping, contact your water management district at 850-539-5999.
2. Don't overwater your lawn. As a general rule, lawns only need watering every five to seven days in the summer and every 10 to 14 days in the winter. A hearty rain eliminates the need for watering for up to two weeks.
3. Buy a rain gauge and use it to determine how much rain your yard has received. Most of the year, lawns only need one inch of water per week.
4. Water lawns during the early morning hours when temperatures and wind speeds are the lowest. This reduces losses from evaporation.
5. Don't allow sprinklers to water your street, driveway or sidewalk. Position them so water lands on the lawn and shrubs and not on paved areas.

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6. Install irrigation devices that are water efficient. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of water efficient irrigation methods.
7. Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees which do not need water as frequently and usually will survive a dry period without watering. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
8. Do not hose down your driveway or sidewalk. Use a broom to clean leaves and other debris from these areas.
9. Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose which can be adjusted down to a fine spray so that water flows only as needed. When finished, turn the hose off at the faucet to avoid leaks.
10. Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. A garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn sprinklers off.
11. Avoid purchasing recreational water toys which require a constant stream of water.
12. Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
13. Avoid the installation of ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water is recycled.

### **General Water Saving Tips**

1. Get involved in water management issues. Voice your questions and concerns at public meeting conducted by your local government or water management district.
2. Be aware of and follow all water conservation and water shortage rules in effect in your community. Don't assume - even if you get your water from a private well - that you need not observe good water use rules. Every drop counts.
3. Report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, errant sprinklers, abandoned free-flowing wells, etc.) to the property owner, local authorities or your water management district.
4. Encourage your school system and local government to help develop and promote a water conservation ethic among children and adults.
5. Support efforts and programs that create a concern for water conservation among tourists and visitors to our state. Make sure your visitors understand the need for, and the benefits of, water conservation.
6. Encourage your friends and neighbors to be part of a water-conscious community. Promote water conservation in community newsletters, on bulletin boards and by example. Encourage your friends, neighbors and co-workers to "do their part."
7. Conserve water because it is the right thing to do. Don't waste water just because someone else is footing the bill, such as when you are staying at a hotel.
8. Try to do one thing each day that will result in saving water. Don't worry if the savings are minimal. Every drop counts. You can make a difference.