



Willits Water Conservation Program

Quinton Roland, Water Conservation Specialist • 707-841-0755 • q@willitscity.com
City of Willits, 111 E. Commercial St., Willits, CA 95490

Outdoor Water Saving Tips

- (1) Evaporative coolers require a seasonal maintenance checkup. For more efficient cooling, check your evaporative cooler annually.
- (2) Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- (3) Avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
- (4) Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps.
- (5) Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost instead and save gallons every time.
- (6) Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower.
- (7) Check your water meter and bill to track your water usage.
- (8) Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.
- (9) Use a layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.
- (10) Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save 80 gallons of water every time.
- (11) Divide your watering cycle into shorter periods to reduce runoff and allow for better absorption every time you water.
- (12) We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.
- (13) Periodically check your pool for leaks if you have an automatic refilling device.
- (14) Only water your lawn when needed. You can tell this by simply walking across your lawn. If you leave footprints, it's time to water.
- (15) Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer grass shades root systems and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.
- (16) Use the sprinkler for larger areas of grass. Water small patches by hand to avoid waste.
- (17) Use porous materials for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff.
- (18) Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees, or collect and use for your garden.
- (19) Water your summer lawns once every three days and your winter lawn once every five days.

- (20) Install a rain shut-off device on your automatic sprinklers to eliminate unnecessary watering.
- (21) Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed.
- (22) Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting shrubs, and ground cover with rock and granite mulching.
- (23) Remember to check your sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the heads in good shape.
- (24) Don't water your lawn on windy days. After all, sidewalks and driveways don't need water.
- (25) Water your plants deeply but less frequently to create healthier and stronger landscapes.
- (26) Make sure you know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save gallons of water and damage to your home if a pipe were to burst.
- (27) When watering grass on steep slopes, use a soaker hose to prevent wasteful runoff.
- (28) Group plants with the same watering needs together to get the most out of your watering time.
- (29) Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light, and water.
- (30) While fertilizers promote plant growth, they also increase water consumption. Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer needed.
- (31) Avoid installing ornamental water features and fountains that spray water into the air. Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation.
- (32) Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- (33) Don't buy recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water.
- (34) Buy a rain gauge to track how much rain or irrigation your yard receives. Check with your local water agency to see how much rain is needed to skip an irrigation cycle.
- (35) Teach your family how to shut off your automatic watering systems. Turn sprinklers off if the system is malfunctioning or when a storm is approaching.
- (36) Set a kitchen timer when watering your lawn or garden with a hose.
- (37) Next time you add or replace a flower or shrub, choose a low water use plant for year-round landscape color and save up to 550 gallons each year.
- (38) Use a grease pencil to mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later. Your pool should lose no more than 1/4 inch each day.
- (39) Use a screwdriver as a soil probe to test soil moisture. If it goes in easily, don't water. Proper lawn watering can save thousands of gallons of water annually.
- (40) Avoid overseeding your lawn with winter grass. Once established, ryegrass needs water every three to five days, whereas dormant Bermuda grass needs water only once a month.
- (41) When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.
- (42) Make sure your swimming pools, fountains, and ponds are equipped with recirculating pumps.
- (43) Landscape with Xeriscape trees, plants and groundcovers. Call your local conservation office for more information about these water thrifty plants.

- (44) Winterize outdoor spigots when temps dip to 20 degrees F to prevent pipes from bursting or freezing.
- (45) Insulate hot water pipes so you don't have to run as much water to get hot water to the faucet.
- (46) Wash your car on the grass. This will water your lawn at the same time.
- (47) If you have an evaporative cooler, direct the water drain to a flowerbed, tree, or your lawn.
- (48) Support projects that use reclaimed wastewater for irrigation and other uses.
- (49) Use a hose nozzle and turn off the water while you wash your car and save more than 100 gallons.
- (50) Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on top of the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
- (51) Pick-up the phone and report significant water losses from broken pipes, open hydrants and errant sprinklers to the property owner or your water management district.
- (52) Bermuda grasses are dormant (brown) in the winter and will only require water once every three to four weeks or less if it rains.
- (53) Start a compost pile. Using compost when you plant adds water-holding organic matter to the soil.
- (54) Use sprinklers that throw big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller drops of water and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground.
- (55) More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering. Be sure only to water plants when necessary.
- (56) Adjust your watering schedule each month to match seasonal weather conditions and landscape requirements.
- (57) Turn the water off while you shampoo and condition your hair and you can save more than 50 gallons a week.
- (58) Bathe your pets outdoors in an area in need of water.
- (59) Water only as rapidly as the soil can absorb the water.
- (60) Aerate your lawn. Punch holes in your lawn about six inches apart so water will reach the roots rather than run off the surface.
- (61) Place an empty tuna can on your lawn to catch and measure the water output of your sprinklers. For lawn watering advice, contact your local conservation office.
- (62) When backwashing your pool, consider using the water on your landscaping.
- (63) For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.
- (64) Throw trimmings and peelings from fruits and vegetables into your yard compost to prevent from using the garbage disposal.
- (65) When you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant.
- (66) Have your plumber re-route your gray water to trees and gardens rather than letting it run into the sewer line. Check with your city codes, and if it isn't allowed in your area, start a movement to get that changed.