



Eastsound Water Users Association

The Importance of Summer Conservation

There is a confluence of factors that make summer a challenge for EWUA and all island water systems. First off, precipitation dramatically decreases during this time of year.

One of the beauties of Orcas Island are the many wonderful gardens residents put great efforts into. Our gardening passion does however significantly increase water usage.

And of course the many island visitors and seasonal residents coming to Orcas substantially swell the island population.

EWUA's water demand in the summer typically doubles. This can put a strain on our delivery service and our operational staff.

We should never take our water for granted; it is among our most precious resources. Conservation efforts are always important but they are especially so in the summer. Here are a number of suggestions for helping to control your water cost and conserve our water resources.

HINTS FOR THE BATHROOM

Test your toilet for leaks. Try adding some simple food coloring dye to a full toilet tank. If the water in the bowl begins to turn color before the next flush, you have a leak. Even a small leak can waste hundreds of gallons of water per week. Don't use the toilet as a trash can, extra flushes are also wasteful.

HINTS FOR THE KITCHEN

Did you know that using your dishwasher can save you water? Running a *full load* of dishes through a dishwasher uses less water than washing by hand. The full load is important. Also try not rinsing dishes before you load in the dishwasher.

Summer is fresh vegetable time of year. You can save water by washing your veggies in a large bowl instead of under running water. Then save even more by using the water in the bowl to water your houseplants.

HINTS FOR THE LAWN & GARDEN

Your summer garden can be a big part of your water consumption this time of year. Water lawns only when needed. A good indication that your lawn is thirsty is when footprints remain after walking on it. Water your lawn in the early morning or evening, not in mid-day when much of the water is lost to evaporation. Typically 1" of water per week is recommended for summer lawns. Try putting out coffee mugs on the lawn while watering to monitor how much water you're using. Of course, you don't actually *have* to water your lawn. A healthy lawn can be allowed to brown in the summer and be expected to return to a vibrant green when the rain returns.

Closely monitor any drip irrigation systems and soaker hoses you have. Although these can be water savers, they also can be just the opposite if improperly installed or poorly monitored. We have seen mistakes in this one area cost members hundreds of dollars in a single month!

Mulching around plants helps reduce evaporation and reduce need to water.

Use a broom instead of a hose to clean up walkways, decks and other outdoor surfaces.

REPORT A LEAK

This time of year, any wet spots around your property should draw your attention. Contact EWUA if you suspect a leak, or if the usage indicated on your bill is higher than you expected. We'll be happy to help you diagnose a problem.