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Contact: Mark Lofland
Contact Number: (859) 578-9898

NKWD Offers Water-Saving Tips for Summer

Indoor and Outdoor Tips Help Customers Be Green and Save Some Green

Erlanger, KY –The Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) is offering tips to help you manage your water usage as the weather gets hot. When the temperatures soar outside, plants and lawns need some extra watering. But knowing how and when to use water can help you make a “green” choice by saving precious water and help save money at the same time.

Most of our water-saving ideas are simple, but they can make a big difference by conserving water and saving money,” said Mark Lofland, Vice President of Account Services and Billing. “

The tips listed below will help you maintain your greenery outside, without wasting water.

Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

- **Only water plants when they need it.**
There is a simple check for this- Dig down several inches near the base of the plant with your finger. If the soil is very dry, then it's time to water. Another sign is when your plants begin to show signs of wilting, especially in the morning.
- **Prioritize your watering needs.**
During drought periods, conserving water could mean choosing which plants receive water – and which do not. Most lawns, except bluegrass, will simply go dormant if not watered. Watering is not necessary and the grass will recover when rainfall returns! Because a 5,000 square foot lawn needs up to 6,000 gallons of water per week to stay green – an expensive undertaking – it is easier to let lawns sleep through a drought than to waste water, money, and effort.
- **Keep off the grass.**
Avoid walking on grass during periods of drought stress. Mow lawns as little as possible during droughts to avoid additional stress, and cut at the highest possible setting. Allow mulched clippings to remain on the lawn to help cool the soil and retain moisture.
- **Help the neediest plants first.**
Forget dramatic measures to save your lawn and concentrate your watering efforts on new plantings, vegetables, and tender annuals. Native plants and most perennials can normally wait until the next rainfall arrives.
- **Use a soil probe to test moisture.**
For lawns, trees, and shrubs, you can use a simple electronic probe to help measure soil moisture and indicate when you should water. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, install a moisture sensor. This probe is placed in the ground and determines when the soil needs water and then turns on the sprinkler. It can save you buckets of both water and money.
- **Use a broom to clean driveways and sidewalks.**
Sweeping paved areas will get them clean without wasting gallons of water and washing organic matter and fertilizers into storm drain systems and waterways.
- **Don't let water run while washing your car.**
Get the car wet, and then turn off the water while you wash the car down using a bucket of soapy water. Turn on the water again for a final rinse. Empty the bucket into a flowerbed or garden area. To protect local streams, try to wash your car on the lawn itself so that no water is wasted. Of course, during a drought, maybe it's best not to wash the car at all. If you must, consider going to a carwash where water is reclaimed and recycled.
- **Don't use sprinklers for entertainment.**
Running through water from a hose or sprinkler is fun and a nifty way to cool down, but it wastes

hundreds of gallons of water in a short time. And running and playing on wet grass will compact soils and lead to a decline in lawn health and vigor.

- **Water early in the morning.**
Water when temperatures are mild and winds are calm, so less water will be lost through evaporation. Don't water at night! Evening applications can lead to fungal diseases. And don't water the wind. Wind causes water to evaporate quickly and blows water onto areas where it's not needed.
- **Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, hose connections, and faucets.**
Even a tiny leak can translate into thousands of gallons of wasted water over a short period of time. Repair or replace any equipment leaking water immediately.
- **Use shut-off nozzles on hoses.**
Use nozzles which completely turn off the water when you are not using it; they also help to more effectively direct water than using your finger to create a stream.
- **Don't water the pavement.**
Position sprinklers so that water is aimed directly at lawn and garden areas rather than sidewalks, paths, driveways, or fences. If it doesn't grow, don't water it! . Along paved areas it might be more efficient to water by hand.
- **Use mulch strips to contain watering areas.**
Consider laying down an eight-inch buffer of mulch adjacent to sidewalks and curbs to reduce runoff and water waste. Using either organic mulches – such as wood chips, shredded wood, or bark nuggets – or landscaping stones and rocks, will eliminate having to water and maintain these covered areas.
- **Large drops mean less waste.**
Use sprinklers that emit large droplets rather than a fine mist to reduce losses through evaporation.
- **Deep soak each time you water.**
Many people water lightly and frequently, causing a shallow root system. Watering deeply and infrequently creates a healthy root system that is better equipped to withstand heat and drought.
- **Water without waste.**
Stop watering whenever runoff occurs, especially on slopes or on compacted, dry soils. That may mean turning the water on and off in cycles to allow moisture to soak into the ground, but it beats watching the water flow down the street. The same is true when puddling occurs. Stop watering and allow moisture to penetrate into the soil before restarting.
- **Use watering cans, whenever possible.**
When dealing with just a few patio plants, watering with a hose may actually put more water on the patio than in the containers as you move from plant to plant.
- **Capture and recycle rainwater.**
Place rain barrels or buckets beneath your downspouts. 1,000 sq. ft. of roof surface will collect 420 gallons of water in every inch of rainfall. You can use rainwater to irrigate by hand or wash your car without any chemical residues.
- **Redirect water from downspouts.**
Channel storm water across lawns and into garden beds away from your house; consider "Rainscaping" by establishing a watershed-friendly garden that will use storm water to thrive and create beauty around your home, school, or office.

NKWD also has Information that can help homeowners make smart water-saving choices indoors too.

Indoor Water Conservation Tips

- **Don't Let Water Run.**
 - When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
 - When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.
 - Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save 4 gallons a minute. That's 200 gallons a week for a family of four.
 - Soak your pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.

Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) serves approximately 80,000 customer accounts, or nearly 350,000 people in Campbell and Kenton Counties, portions of Boone, Grant and Pendleton Counties, and the Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport. NKWD operates from its headquarters, which opened in May 2006 in Erlanger, Kentucky after the consolidation of the majority of its operations, with the exception of its water treatment facilities: Taylor Mill, Fort Thomas and Memorial Parkway. 2

- Wash your produce in the sink or a pan that is partially filled with water instead of running water from the tap.
- **Check your sprinkler system frequently.**
Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- **Run your washing machine and dishwasher only when they are full.**
You could save 1000 gallons a month.
- **Use the garbage disposal sparingly.**
Compost instead and save gallons every time.
- **Know when to plant.**
Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower.
- **Use a pitcher.**
Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks, so that every drop goes down you not the drain.
- **Reuse water.**
 - Collect the water you use for rinsing produce and reuse it to water houseplants.
 - Keep a bucket in the shower to catch water as it warms up or runs. Use this water to flush toilets or water plants.
- **Clean your driveway dry.**
Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save 80 gallons of water every time.
- **Use water efficient fixtures.**
If your shower can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, then replace it with a water-efficient showerhead.
- **Watch the time.**
Time your shower to keep it under 5 minutes. You'll save up to 1000 gallons a month.
- **Designate one glass for your drinking water each day.**
This will cut down on the number of times you run your dishwasher.
- **Bathe your young children together.**
This prevents you from using water to shower or bathe each child.
- **Use a wastebasket.**
Drop that tissue in the trash instead of flushing it and save gallons every time.
- **Wash full loads.**
Wash clothes only when you have a full load and save up to 600 gallons each month.
- **Fix leaks.**
Listen for dripping faucets and toilets that flush themselves. Fixing a leak can save 500 gallons each month.

“These are ideas the entire family can learn and practice together,” said Ron Lovan, NKWD President and CEO. “Practicing even a few of these tips regularly can make a real long-term difference.”

There are even more steps customers can take to conserve water. For more information, visit www.nkywater.org and click on “conservation”.

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