

Water

Water, water, what would we do
If we had to do without you!
Imagine a playground without any grass
There'd be no showers, there'd be no baths!
So, at home and at school
Let us make a special rule:
Save it for me
Save it for you
Save it for our future
Now, that would be cool!

By Daniel Ward
4th Grade

In her poem entitled *Water*, fourth grader Daniel Ward has made a real and meaningful statement that we all need to pay attention to. Water is essential to life on earth. We need water to grow food, keep clean, provide power, control fire, and last but not least, we need it to stay alive! Water conservation is the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to reduce our demand for water.

There is good news and bad news about the state of our water supply today. Many areas on the planet Earth are experiencing severe water shortages and drought. Water, being a non-renewable resource, is essential to our existence.

April was Water Conservation Month, however, we need to practice water conservation all year round. There are so many ways that you can save water daily without a lot of effort on your part. One of the first things you can practice is obeying the water restriction rules that Southwest Florida Water Management has put in place. Properties are to be watered only once a week. If your property is less than 2 acres then you can water only during the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Irrigation days for residences are regulated by house numbers. If your house number ends in a 0 or 1 you water on Monday; if it ends with 2 or 3 you water on Tuesday; 4 or 5 is Wednesday; 6 or 7 is Thursday and 8 or 9 is Friday.

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The Natural Resource Conservation Service offers the following tips and information regarding the important subject of water conservation:

“Simple ways of reducing the amount of water used for irrigation include growing xeriphytic species (plants that are adapted to dry conditions), mulching, adding water retaining organic matter to the soil, and installing windbreaks and fences to slow winds and reduce evapotranspiration. Watering in the early morning before the sun is intense helps reduce the water lost from evaporation. Installing rain gutters and collecting water from downspouts also helps reduce water use.

Trickle irrigation and drip irrigation systems help reduce water use and meet the needs of plants. With these methods, very small amounts of water are supplied to the base of the plants. Since the water is applied directly to the soil, rather than onto the plant, evaporation from leaf

surfaces is reduced. The water is also placed where it will do the most good, rather than sprayed over the entire garden.”

To do your part and conserve precious water for future generations, consider taking the “conservation challenge.” Southwest Florida Water Management District challenges children and adults alike to take the pledge and reduce water use by 10 gallons a day. If every person were to strive to meet this challenge, think of the amount of water that could be saved.

Here is their challenge. Print it out and copy it. See how much water you can save. Are you up to the challenge?

- Take shorter showers = 4 gallons per minute.
- Fix a leaky faucet or toilet = 5 to 200 gallons per day
- Use a broom instead a water hose to clean the driveway and sidewalks = 9 gallons per minute
- Adjust sprinklers so they water only lawn and plant areas – not driveways, sidewalks and streets
- Install water-saving sprinklers and a rain sensor to override the sprinkler system when it rains.
- Encourage family, friends and neighbors to conserve water.
- Only run the dishwasher when it is full = 12 gallons per load.
- When taking a bath, close the drain before turning on the water and only fill the tub half way = 18 gallons vs. 36 gallons (full tub).
- Throw tissues, bugs and other trash in the wastebasket, not the toilet = 4 gallons per flush.
- Turn off the faucet while washing hands or face = 4 gallons per minute.
- Wait until there is a full basket of laundry before running the laundry machine = 43 gallons per load.