

Tips for Water Saving

Water Saving Tips

- Incorporate organic matter into light soils to improve water retention.
- Mulch the soil surface to hold moisture in and keep weeds down. Try bark, gravel or slate. Use ground cover membrane beneath for maximum benefit.
- Concentrate watering on new plants and the most valuable ones.
- When planting trees and large shrubs, place a watering tube from the surface to the roots. Water directly down the tube.
- Around larger plants, mound the soil into a moat shape so that surface water doesn't run away.
- Link water butts together with overflow pipes to collect the maximum amount.
- Recycle 'grey water' from the sink and bath. Avoid dishwasher and washing machine water as these may contain strong detergents.
- Line porous containers with newspaper, or plastic liner with drainage holes.
- Add water retaining gel to compost.
- Soil based composts, such as John Innes, dry out much less than peat based ones.
- Allow a gap of a few inches between the top of the pot and the compost so that water can be puddled on the top. Place saucers beneath to collect excess.
- Containers heat up in direct sunlight so group pots together to provide each other with shade. Mulch the soil surface with decorative aggregates.
- Select drought-resistant plants. These often have needle or strap-like leaves, e.g. grasses, conifers, lavender and rosemary. Also try silver leaf plants like artemisia and santolina.
- Select the right plants for each area of your garden. Free plant lists are available at Bawdeswell Garden Centre.
- Weeds absorb valuable moisture, so spray with weedkiller or remove by hand. Avoid hoeing and major soil cultivation as moisture is lost every time.
- Planting is best carried out in autumn. Plants are dormant above ground but the roots are still actively growing. Avoid summer planting where at all possible.
- When mowing the lawn, set the blades at their highest during dry spells.
- In autumn, applying root-building feeds to lawns and ornamental plants. Plants with strong roots will survive dry summers much better than those with thin shallow roots.
- In dry spells, lawns may appear to be suffering but they almost always recover. Don't waste vast amount of water with a sprinkler.
- Watering should be done either early morning or late evening. This reduces instant evaporation from the soil, and plants can absorb the maximum moisture.
- Water plants as close to the base as possible. Apply a little at a time so water travels down rather than across the surface. Never spray overhead as leaves can get scorched and so much water is wasted.
- Invest in automatic watering systems on an over night timer. Use seep hoses.
- A thorough soaking every other day is better than a little each day. Roots are encouraged to grow down in search of water thus avoiding shallow surface roots.

