

# WATER'S WORTH SAVING

Your super handy guide to  
saving water in outdoor spaces

**ESSEX & SUFFOLK**  
**WATER** *living water*

**WATER'S**  
**WORTH SAVING** 



# WATER'S WORTH SAVING

Water is a precious resource and if we can reduce the amount we waste, it will help to protect the environment. Saving water will also bring benefits to customers on a meter, who are paying for what they use.

For customers who are not on a meter, you can find out how much water you use on our usage calculator [eswater.co.uk/calculator](https://eswater.co.uk/calculator). Essex & Suffolk Water supplies water in the driest part of the country. It is important that we work together to make sure a safe and constant supply of water is available for years to come.

Essex & Suffolk Water actively works with both domestic and commercial customers to help promote the efficient use of water. This guide aims to provide you with hints and tips that will help you do your bit and save water in your garden.

Whether your garden is big or small, there are differences we can make to the amount of water we use.

## **WATER WITH CARE, WE ALL NEED TO SHARE!**

Gardening is a popular pastime and the garden itself is a great place to enjoy the outdoors. At Essex & Suffolk Water, we understand this and recognise that water is needed to keep gardens looking their best.

There are lots of things that you can do to help you use water wisely while gardening. From choosing the right plants to knowing when to water, the rest of this booklet will tell you all you need to know to keep your garden looking great while saving water.



# HOW MUCH WATER DO YOU USE?

Each person in the region uses on average 150 litres per day – multiply this over a whole year and that becomes a lot of water, 54,750 litres to be exact. That's 36 and a half thousand kettles full.

The table shows water usage in an average home over a year. You can use the table to help you estimate how much water you use based on how many people live in your home and where you use water in your home and garden. If you have a water meter, your bill will also show your water consumption more accurately.

| Litres used per household (1,100 litres = 1m³ = 220 gallons) |  |  |   |  |         |
|--|--|--|---|--|---------|
| Number of people in the household                            | <b>LOW</b>            | <b>AVERAGE</b>                | <b>HIGH</b>    | <b>VERY HIGH</b>    |         |
|  | Prefers showers<br>Few/no baths<br>No washing machine/<br>infrequent user<br>Little/no garden watering | Mixture of bath/showers<br>Prefers showers<br>Regular use of washing<br>machine,<br>no dishwasher<br>No hosepipe | Frequent bath/showers<br>Regular use of<br>washing machine<br>Not using a washing up<br>bowl when washing up<br>Occasional hosepipe use | Frequent baths<br>Heavy use of<br>washing machine<br>Not using a washing<br>up bowl when washing up<br>Extensive use of<br>sprinkler/hosepipe<br>Leaving the tap running<br>while cleaning teeth and<br>washing up |         |
|  | 1  | 40,000   | 55,000  | 70,000   | 135,000 |
|  | 2  | 70,000   | 90,000  | 115,000  | 180,000 |
|  | 3  | 95,000   | 125,000   | 155,000  | 220,000 |
|  | 4  | 115,000  | 150,000   | 185,000  | 250,000 |
|  | 5  | 135,000  | 170,000   | 215,000  | 280,000 |

# WHERE DO WE USE IT MOST?

Water's worth saving in the home and in the garden. With 6% of our water being used outdoors, let's see what we can do to use less!



**26%**  
Toilet



**7%**  
Washing Machine



**20%**  
Bath



**15%**  
Kitchen Sink



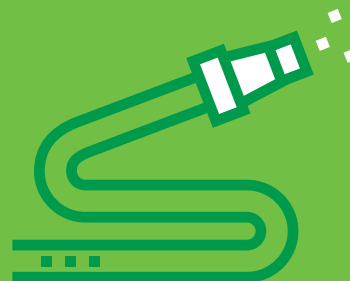
**8%**  
Basins



**17%**  
Showers



**1%**  
Dishwashers



**6%**  
Outdoor Use

Our data shows that this is how a typical household in England uses water. Would you agree?



# CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLANTS

A visit to your local garden centre is the best place to start when considering water use in the garden. Choosing plants that flourish with less water will make sure you start as you mean to go on.

Plants always look happier and perform best when grown in the right environment.

## TO SAVE WATER IN YOUR GARDEN, LOOK FOR PLANTS THAT HAVE:

- Hairy leaves - will help reduce the drying effect of the wind and reflect the sun's rays.
- Leathery or waxy leaves - will help prevent water-loss and evaporation by the wind.
- Thin needle-like leaves - a very small surface area loses very little water and some plants will roll their leaves inwards reducing their surface even more.
- Tiny leaves - very small leaves reduce the surface area to prevent excess water loss through evaporation.

## IDEAS ON WHAT TO PLANT...

- *Zauschneria californica* (Californian fuchsia)
- *Sedum spectabile* (Stonecrop/Ice Plant)
- *Verbena bonariensis* (Purpletop Vervain)
- *Allium hollandicum* (Purple Sensation)
- *Cistus monspeliensis* (Montpelier rock rose)
- *Stipa gigantea* (Golden oats)
- *Cytisus burkwoodii* (Broom 'Burkwoodii')
- *Festuca glauca* (Blue fescue 'Blaufuchs')
- *Tulipa tarda* (Late tulip)
- *Euphorbia x martini* (Martin's spurge)
- *Artemisia arborescens* (tree wormwood)
- *Delosperma cooperi* (Cooper's ice plant)

For further information visit [rhs.org.uk/plants](https://rhs.org.uk/plants).



# PLANTING TIPS

Give plants a good soaking before and after planting. If the soil is dry, fill the planting hole with water, let this drain and repeat the process several times, before placing the plant in the earth. That way, you know the plant is in moist soil and will send out roots quickly. Encouraging a deep root network will ensure the plant draws on the soils reserves in the drier months.

Borders are best planted densely to provide effective ground cover. This will help to reduce weeds, which will in turn help avoid disturbing the soil when weeding which could create further water loss.

## **POTS, CONTAINERS AND HANGING BASKETS**

Put plants in large containers as they will retain moisture more effectively than smaller pots. Ceramic or metal pots are less porous than terracotta, although lining every pot with plastic and topping them with mulch will assist in water retention.

Try and group your plants together. This allows plants to shade each other and, as a result, less moisture will be lost from their leaves.

If you are able, position your containers in a sheltered spot near the kitchen. You can then also easily use your washing up water on your plants. Add gel crystals to the soil before planting and plants will need watering less often. Using a fine textured compost will hold much more water. Sandwiching a layer of polythene between the moss and liner of a hanging basket will stop the water draining straight through.

# WATERING: AVOID THE BAN, USE THE CAN!

A huge amount of the water we use at home during the summer is poured and sprinkled onto our gardens. It is often difficult to know when a plant needs water. The best guide comes from digging 30cm into the soil. If the soil feels damp at this depth, water is not needed, but if it feels dry then some plants may need a drink. Try not to over water your plants. If the soil becomes waterlogged, it can do your plants more harm than good.

Consider the size of your lawn. A larger lawn can be hard to maintain, especially during the summer. Having a smaller lawn will give you the opportunity to increase your range of plants. Consider using turf which has been specially designed to need less moisture and withstand dry conditions.

Ever thought about changing from a lawn to a wildflower meadow? Sewing wildflower seeds can give you a maintenance free meadow in your own back garden. Not only does this save you time on mowing and weeding, it will also help to support important wildlife like bees and butterflies!

A watering can uses a small amount of water in comparison to hoses and sprinkler systems. Using a watering can allows you to visibly see how much water is being used. Why not use rain water? It's free.

## REDUCE THE STRAIN, CATCH THE RAIN

Invest in a water butt and collect rainwater for use during a dry period. If you have a water butt already, why not consider buying a second and linking two together? Water butts are ideal for collecting rainwater from the roof of your house, garage, greenhouse or shed. Water butts enable you to have a source of water without having to tap into your home's supply. Plants prefer rainwater too.

Remember this rhyme! Save water going down the drain, collect what you can during the rain.

## GREYWATER RECYCLING

Plants can be watered with bath, shower, kitchen sink and washing machine water, which is collectively known as 'greywater'. When using greywater there are a few simple rules to follow:

- Never re-use water containing strong detergents.
- Avoid re-using water when a member of the household is ill.
- Always allow the water to cool before re-use.
- Vary where you use greywater in the garden.
- Do not use greywater on edible crops.
- Only water plants at the roots, never on the leaves.

For more information on greywater, please visit **[environment-agency.gov.uk](https://environment-agency.gov.uk)** and search for 'greywater'.

# SAVE WATER OUTDOORS

Keeping our gardens looking their best is not the only reason that water is used outside of the home. A huge amount of water is also used for activities such as washing cars, cleaning windows and even to cool off on a sunny day.

Here are a few tips to help you save water whilst doing the wide range of other activities outdoors.

## WASHING THE CAR

Using the hose to wash your car uses about 90 litres of water for each car wash. One of the best ways to save water is to use a bucket and watering can – doing so will save up to 30 litres of water each time. That's enough water for a shower!

If you do need to use a hose, install a trigger hose gun. This will allow you to turn the water on and off as and when you need it. Order a free hose gun at [nwl.watersavingkit.com](http://nwl.watersavingkit.com)

You could go one step further and use rainwater collected using a water butt to wash and/or rinse your car.

## PADDLING POOLS

A typical paddling pool uses anywhere between 110 litres and 2,300 litres. Some of the larger paddling pools use the same amount of water as a family of four uses in twelve days! Rethink your use and look at other ways to keep cool.

If you are using a paddling pool invest in a cover to keep the water fresh without having to refill. And always make sure to empty your pool onto your lawn or use the water for your plants and borders – this can also be a fun game for little ones to see who can water the most plants in five minutes!

## PRESSURE WASHERS

Many people now use pressure washers to wash their car and clean the patio. Pressure washers use about 400 litres of water an hour. Try to use them for only a short amount of time or consider other ways in which you could do the same jobs.

## HOT TUBS

Many people are now purchasing hot tubs which is having a drastic impact on the amount of water, in demand, particularly over the warmer summer months. A hot tub can typically hold around 1500 litres of water each time it is filled up. To reduce evaporation, make sure you use a hot tub cover and check your manufacturers guide on the correct chemical dosage to prevent unnecessary refills.



# USING WATER OUTDOORS

Water's worth saving outdoors, and it's also worth re-using where you can.

Every time a pond is topped up, on average 800 litres of water is used. Why not try using rainwater collected in a water butt to fill your pond?\*

## CATCH THE RAIN AND RE-USE IT!

One of the most efficient ways to save water in the garden is to use a water butt or two. They will help collect some of the 90,000 litres of rain that falls on each UK rooftop each year. You can then use this water to feed your plants or wash your car. Now that's clever.

Other benefits of saving water and increasing the use of rainwater can include helping to reduce the risk of flooding, storing more water and nutrients for your plants, allowing your plants to grow deeper roots to access more water beneath the surface and using your collected rainwater when there is little or none.

## GETTING A GREEN LAWN THE GREENER WAY

- Firstly, how much grass does a person need? A smaller lawn with flower beds and features will save mowing and you could water less. It'll take less time and effort, and is more eco-friendly. Ta-da!
- Avoid over-watering your lawn. It encourages the grass roots to grow closer to the surface so it's more likely to dry out. It's still ok to mow regularly in hot weather. Just set the mower to cut a little higher and leave the clippings on the lawn to help protect it. Simple.

## A LOT TO BE SAVED AT THE ALLOTMENT

If you water your allotment in the middle of a sunny day then chances are, a large proportion of the moisture will simply evaporate before you've even left the site. Make sure you are caring for your soil and collect free rainwater on site. Lots of these water saving tips can be applied outside of our gardens and shared with our local communities.

\*Figures based on an average pond in a UK garden.

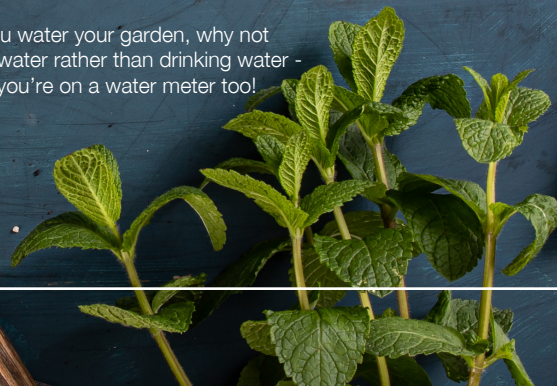


# OUR TOP TEN GARDEN TIPS!

1. Select the right plants that will thrive in your garden. Visit [rhs.org.uk/plants](https://rhs.org.uk/plants) to find out which plants are right for you.
2. Check plant labels. These can guide you to finding plenty of suitable plants to meet your garden needs.
3. Allow plants to grow at their own pace. Don't overfeed or overwater them – doing so makes plants more susceptible to drought conditions.
4. Plant borders densely as this will provide effective ground cover and therefore help the soil to retain moisture.
5. Use a thick layer of mulch such as wood chippings, garden compost and leaf mould to help control weeds, keep the soil cool, reduce evaporation and soil compaction.
6. Mix water storing crystals into the soil when planting hanging baskets, containers, and pots as these will release water as and when the plants need it.
7. Water in the evening so the water stays in the soil for longer.
8. Don't over-water your lawn as this encourages roots to grow closer to the surface, making the roots sensitive in drought and dry periods. A lawn may turn brown but will quickly recover in the wetter months.
9. Water at the base of the plant. There is no need to water the leaves, paths or lawns.
10. When you water your garden, why not use rain water rather than drinking water - handy if you're on a water meter too!

## NEED MORE IDEAS? VISIT RHS HYDE HALL

With Essex being the driest region in England, we've been working closely with the brilliant Royal Horticultural Society's Hyde Hall for years to develop the 'Dry Gardens' at Hyde Hall. This is one of Hyde Hall's crowning achievements. It's a triumphant showcase of gardens boasting plants that live well and thrive with less water. For inspiration to glorify your outdoor space, why not give them a visit? They're based just off the A130 near Chelmsford and are open all year round [rhs.org.uk](https://rhs.org.uk)



# WATER SAVING PRODUCTS

There are a huge range of water saving products that will help you save water both in and outside your home. As an Essex & Suffolk Water customer, you can request many products for free.

A wider range of products can also be bought through the organisations that we work with.

## FREE WATER SAVING KIT

The kit contains a variety of different water saving devices including water storing gel, trigger hose gun, Save-a-Flush, a shower aerator, a tap insert, shower timer and a universal plug.

For more information or to order your free kit, visit: [esw.watersavingkit.com](http://esw.watersavingkit.com).

## FREE GARDENING PRODUCTS:

Visit [eswater.co.uk/garden](http://eswater.co.uk/garden) to order your:

- Trigger hose gun
- Water storage crystals
- Water stick (this device indicates whether potted plants need watering).

## WATER, BUTT WISELY!

We work with trusted suppliers to provide water saving products to our customers. Water butts are available through our website via our third party suppliers. Order yours online from [eswater.co.uk/savewater](http://eswater.co.uk/savewater).

## NEED SOME SPECIFIC INFORMATION?

Water saving pages  
[eswater.co.uk/savewater](http://eswater.co.uk/savewater)

Waterwise (for information on water saving products and appliances):  
[waterwise.org.uk](http://waterwise.org.uk)

Environment Agency:  
[environment-agency.gov.uk](http://environment-agency.gov.uk)

Consumer Council for Water:  
[ccwater.org.uk](http://ccwater.org.uk)

WRAP (water saving for businesses):  
[wrap.org.uk](http://wrap.org.uk)

Waterwise:  
[waterwise.org.uk](http://waterwise.org.uk)

Water's Worth Saving:  
[watersworthsavings.org.uk](http://watersworthsavings.org.uk)

We'd love to hear your own water savings tips along with any feedback you have on this booklet by emailing [savingwater@nwl.co.uk](mailto:savingwater@nwl.co.uk).



To find out more about saving  
water in your home, visit  
**[eswater.co.uk/savewater](https://eswater.co.uk/savewater)**  
or scan the QR code below.



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