



GREEN HOME AND GARDEN TIP # 1 1

BY GREEN HOME AND GARDEN COMMITTEE,
Texas Master Naturalist

This month we are republishing tips for the home promoted by the TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) in their "Take Care of Texas" campaign. The program is designed to involve all Texans in lifestyle and habit changes that will save the individuals a little money and at the same time help improve air and water quality, conserve water and energy, and reduce waste. This is the last tip in the series by TCEQ. You can find more tips and information by visiting <http://www.takecareoftexas.org/do-your-part-en/>

In the Bathroom

Fix Leaks

Check your faucets, and fix any leak you find. A faucet leaking at a rate of one drop per second can waste up to 1,660 gallons of water per year. Fixing hot-water leaks can save up to \$35 per year in utility bills. If every household fixed just one leaky faucet, we could reduce water use in Texas by over 13 billion gallons a year.

Annual Savings: \$35

Wash Full Loads and Use Cold Water

Washing full loads as opposed to partial loads of laundry can save an average household more than 3,400 gallons of water each year. If all Texas households washed only full loads of laundry, it would reduce water consumption throughout Texas by more than 27 billion gallons each year. Using cold water for laundry instead of hot or warm water can save the average household more than \$30 annually.

Annual Savings: \$30

Install Low-Flow Showerheads and Faucet Aerators

The shower is the largest single user of hot water in the home, accounting for 37% of total hot-water use. By installing a low-flow showerhead, you can reduce water consumption by 25% to 60% and save energy, too. In addition, bathroom sink faucets account for more than 15% of indoor household water use. Installing aerators on your water faucets will cut the amount of water used by each faucet in half. Installing just one low-flow showerhead can save you \$145 on your utility bill.

Annual Savings: \$145

Invest in a New Low-Flow Toilet

Toilets are by far the main source of water use in the home, accounting for approximately 30% of residential indoor water consumption. Replacing an older toilet with a low-flow toilet can save 9,000 gallons of water a year, the equivalent to a 17-year drinking supply for one person. If 25 percent of all Texas households reduced their water consumption by replacing one older toilet with a 1.6-gallon-per-flush toilet, it would reduce water consumption throughout Texas by 19 billion gallons annually.

Annual Savings: \$90

Lower the Thermostat on Your Water Heater

Water heating is the third-largest energy expense in your home. For maximum efficiency, use an Energy Star water heater, set your water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees, and wrap it with an insulating jacket to reduce heat loss. For each 10-degree reduction in water temperature, you can save between 3% to 5% in energy costs.

Annual Savings: \$475

The Texas Master Naturalists is a group of informed volunteers who are interested in learning about and educating others about the area of Texas where we live and with preserving our natural heritage. We are co-sponsored by the AgriLIFE Extension (a Texas A&M System service) and Texas Parks and Wildlife. For more information about our group, log on to <http://gcmn.tamu.edu> or www.coastalprairie.org.

The Green Home and Garden Workshop is an ongoing project co-sponsored by the Gulf Coast chapter and the Coastal Prairie chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. Our mission is to interest and inform people about safe and eco-friendly ways to garden and maintain their homes. We have a workshop event once a year. The next workshop will be held in February, 2009.