

 **INSIDE THE HOME**

# WATER WORKS

Save water and energy, one step at a time. By Kristina Anderson

In the Land of 10,000 Lakes, it's hard to believe that water supply could ever be a problem. But Sara Smith, senior planner at the Metropolitan Council, says otherwise: "While the metropolitan area does have enough today, [water] is not an endless resource," she says. In the metro area, we use 290 million gallons every day. To cut back on your own water use, try some of these tips.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO: OUTSIDE



Twenty percent of water use in the metro area is spent outdoors. The main culprit: lawns. Here's how to conserve:

- Landscape with native and drought-tolerant plants.

• Use an automatic sprinkler system with "precipitation detection," so you're not wasting water while it's raining.



- Water in the morning to avoid evaporation.



• Use a drip irrigation system for plants—another great way to avoid evaporation.

- Check your soil to make sure it needs watering. It only takes about one-and-a-half to two inches of water each week to keep your lawn looking green—and that includes rain.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO: INSIDE

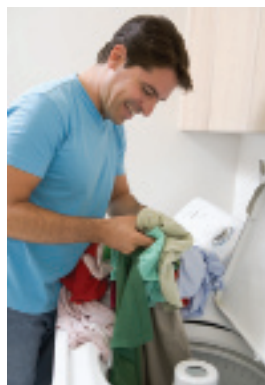
Households spend an average of \$500 annually on sewer and water bills. Try these water- and money-saving tips:



- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth.
- Install water-efficient faucets, toilets, showerheads, washing machines, and dishwashers. You could save up to \$170 each year.
- Take a short shower, not a bath. A full tub uses up to 70 gallons of water, while a five-minute shower takes just 10 to 25 gallons.



Keep an eye out for leaks. A fixture leaking one drip per second could waste as much as 3,000 gallons in a year.



- Run your washing machine or dishwasher only when full.

## BOTTLED WATER: DO OR DON'T?

In June 2009, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska stopped selling bottled water. "We have a very safe water supply in America," says Mary Meyer, the Arboretum's interim director. "There is really no reason to bottle and sell water." Here are some reasons to ditch the bottle:



- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration requires that bottled water be tested weekly for bacterial contamination, whereas the Environmental Protection Agency requires water systems serving more than 1 million residents to administer 300 to 480 tests per month.

• Each year, it takes about 17.6 million barrels of oil to produce plastic bottles for water—that's enough to fuel 1 million cars for a year.



- Less than 20 percent of water bottles are recycled.

