



# Environmentally Friendly

Tips on how you can easily help the environment

## At home, in the garden,

Buy in bulk - it reduces the amount of packaging you take home and saves you money.

Avoid impulse buying as you often buy things you don't end up using.

Place a "no advertising material" sticker on your letter box.

Be selective when shopping - buy items with packaging that can be reused.

Keep reusable calico bags in your car to use next time you go shopping.

Avoid buying disposable items like nappies, razors or tissues. The durable alternatives (cloth nappies, electric razor or handkerchiefs) last longer and might be cheaper in the long run.

Kleenex boxes - Store plastic grocery store bags in them. You can then grab the bag just like you grab a tissue out of the box.

Fill a small plastic bottle with water and put it in your toilet cistern. This will reduce the amount of water used each time you flush the toilet. By the end of the year the amount is amazing. You can also get 'hippo' bags from most water providers which effectively do the same thing.

Don't throw away unwanted clothes, toys or household goods. Charity shops and organisations are always in need of such materials. Hospitals and doctors surgeries may welcome your unwanted toys and books.

### Mobile Phones...

are now recyclable all around Australia. To find out where you can recycle them in your area, call 1300 730 070 or log onto [www.amta.org.au](http://www.amta.org.au) then select "recycling"



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Compost or mulch your green waste. Up to 50 per cent of our waste at home is green waste - putting mulch on your garden can also reduce water loss to evaporation by up to 75 per cent. Shredded newspaper can be used also.

Buy a worm farm for your food scraps instead of throwing them out. Kids love feeding worms and watching them multiply. You can store your food in an old ice cream container before feeding it to the worms.

Milk cartons can be re-used for planting seeds and seedlings - punch some drainage holes in the bottom and the carton will protect the young seedling from both weather and pests and will biodegrade as the plant grows. Egg cartons can be used also.

Give clean used milk cartons to your local school or kindergarten for craft projects.

Cartoon pages of newspapers, magazines and old comic books can be reused as fun gift-wrapping paper for children's presents.

A little bit of vinegar on newspaper is an effective and cheap window or mirror cleaner.

Use old pantyhose, cut in lengths crosswise to tie up tomato plants.

Crushed egg shells are fine plant food - put them right into your compost heap or garden soil.

A heavy polyethylene bag makes a perfect plant cover on chilly nights.

Don't throw away fireplace ashes! They should be put straight onto your compost heap - or your garden soil. Do the same with coffee grounds as they attract earthworms.

## Make a conscious effort...

**to make one less car journey on your own each week. Walk, cycle, take the bus or train or share a lift with someone else. You'll be reducing your contribution to pollution by around 15%**

## or at the office.

Use the other side of waste paper for rough notes and quick lists.

On your computer - reduce the use of paper by proof reading your work from the screen before printing a hard copy.

Send messages via e-mail rather than fax and save paper.

Take your lunch in a reusable container.

Promote recycling in the workplace by providing bins for food scraps and some for paper only.

### Plastic Containers...

For now, only type 1 and 2 plastics are being recycled. This includes most milk and beverage containers. If you're not sure your plastic container can be recycled, simply look for the number on the bottom within the recycling loop:

Make sure the container is empty, crushed and dispose of the lid in the rubbish (the lids are not recyclable).

# Water Savers

*Easy ways to conserve water*

## around the home

Don't hose down your driveway, sweep it instead. Not only does this save water usage but you can add the rubbish to your compost heap.

Regularly check your outdoor taps, pipes and plumbing fixtures for leaks. Just one dripping tap can waste 5,000 litres a month.

Most washing machines have a load adjustment button or dial, so try to set this to match the amount of washing you're doing. If your machine doesn't have a load adjustment function, try to wait until you have enough washing for a full load.

Try not to run the dishwasher until you have a full load.

Turn off the tap whilst brushing your teeth, better still rinse using a cup of water.

Lever or mixer taps (with a single lever or knob) let you find the right water temperature quickly. This means you won't waste water trying to get the balance right.

When cleaning, use a bucket to wash and rinse where possible, instead of running the taps or hose.

Washing fruit and vegies in a half filled sink instead of under running water is a great way to cut back on water wastage. This is the same for rinsing your dishes.

Think about installing dual-flush toilets. They use half as much water as conventional models.

AAA-rating dishwasher and low flow taps can be installed to reduce water usage.

When washing your car, park it on the lawn and use a bucket for washing and rinsing. This way you can save water, as well as water and fertilise your lawn - car shampoos use phosphates that are similar to many fertilisers.

**Search for water-wise plants suitable for your garden at:**

<http://www.conservewater.melbournewater.com.au/scripts/plants/searchPlants.asp>

## in the garden,

Water your garden early in the morning, to reduce evaporation. Evening watering leaves water on the plants overnight, which can encourage fungal diseases. It's best to water the roots and soil around plants rather than spraying the leaves and flowers.

For a non water-wise garden water approx. every second day for 20 minutes in summer, and every third day for 10 to 15 minutes in spring and autumn. Seldom in winter unless there is a very dry spell.

Switch to hose-connected sprinklers: Automatic sprinkler systems operated as above uses around 50,000 litres of water a year. Hose-connected sprinklers operated for the same length of time use around half of that. If you need a watering system consider installing a drip irrigation system. It will cut wastage by making sure the water goes only where you need it.

When watering the lawn give it a good, deep soaking every few days rather than a little every day. This will help develop a good, strong root system. A good soaking every now and then with a hand-held hose will help make your lawn more drought resistant by encouraging deeper roots. To assist the establishment of your new lawn and to minimise the amount of water it requires, it is recommended that you apply a light top dressing to your lawn.

Talk to your local nursery or landscape supplier about a suitable weed-free, sand based, organic top dressing mix. Try not to cut lawns too short. When mowing, cut only the top third of the leaf area, leaving it three centimetres or higher, this shades the roots and reduces evaporation. Reduce water loss even further by saving your lawn clippings to use as mulch on your lawn or garden. When deciding on a lawn type, go for slow growing, water saving varieties like Palmetto. They have deep roots for drought tolerance and they don't need mowing as much as other varieties.

To check how much water you have given your lawn place a bucket on your lawn before you start watering. When it is one centimetre full, the lawn has had enough.

Group plants together in the garden that require similar amounts of water, this will make it easier when watering and will also help eliminate the problem of using excess water.

Use Plastic, glazed or painted pots as they are more water-wise because these are less porous.

Use deep mulch and add compost to your soil. These add nutrients and help to retain moisture and reduce evaporation.

## pool pointers,

Keep the water level of your pool halfway up the skimmer opening. Overfilling the pool stops the skimmer working efficiently and wastes water.

A pool cover is a clever way to reduce evaporation and the need to regularly top up your pool's water level. Without a cover, more than half the water in your pool can evaporate over a year.



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